Remembering Rebellion:
ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān in Medieval Islamic Historiography

A Dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in History

by

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July 2003

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Heather Nina Keaney

Dedicated to:

My parents who taught me to love history,
Shirley and Steve who taught me history,
And Jim who loves me.

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A hard time we had of it.
At the end we preferred to travel all night,
Sleeping in snatches,
With the voices singing in our ears, saying
That this was all folly...

But there was no information, and so we continued
And arrived at evening, not a moment too soon
Finding the place; it was (you may say) satisfactory.[1]

---

[1] T.S. Eliot, "Journey of the Magi."

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ABSTRACT

Remembering Rebellion: ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān in Medieval Islamic Historiography

By

Heather Nina Keaney

In the past thirty-five years the study of medieval Islamic historiography has shifted away from believing that Muslim chroniclers wanted to convey the facts to the belief that chroniclers had a story to tell. Nevertheless, while genuine authorship has been widely accepted for al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) and a few of his contemporaries, the image of a sacrosanct past and a static historical narrative has characterized post-Ṭabarī historiographic studies up to the present. My dissertation argues that through the *isnād-khabar* format historians could retain the authority of past sources while at the same time producing new narratives that reflect contemporary debates. I analyze this process of "unavowed authorship" by comparing how chroniclers selected, arranged, and edited their sources in order to produce unique narratives of the revolt against the third Caliph ʿUthmān b. ʿAffan.

The revolt against ʿUthmān was a cataclysmic event. It marked the end of the religio-political balance established by Muḥammad and inaugurated the struggle for authentic Islamic government. It was the first revolt against a Muslim ruler, it opened the door to Muslims killing other Muslims, and it led to a series of events that brought about the end of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. The revolt also contributed to the permanent division between Sunnī and Shīʿite Islam. Finally, the two sides in the revolt came to represent in Islamic collective memory and political discourse one of

the key tensions in Islamic government -- justice vs. unity of the community. The tension between Sunnīs and Shīʿites, religious and political authority, unity and justice, have been debated ever since, and indeed have yet to be resolved.

My analysis of the historiography of the revolt against ʿUthmān explores the ways in which medieval Muslim historians advocated various political visions through their portrayal of the revolt against ʿUthmān. Moreover, by comparing narratives of ʿUthmān within and between particular time periods, I restore to these chroniclers their status as individuals and authors while at the same time showing how they were responding to particular literary currents and historical events, from the third/ninth century to the eighth/fourteenth century, from Baghdad to Cairo to Cordoba.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EI^2	Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition
IJMES	International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JRAS	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society
JSAI	Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam
REI	Revue des études islamiques

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION & DATING

Transliteration is based on the modified form of the *Encyclopeadia of Islam, Revised Edition* ("j" instead of "d̲j" and "q" instead of "ḳ"). The final *ta marbūṭa* of isolated words is also expressed as a final un-aspirated "h" (i.e., *fitnah*). Plurals are anglicized, such as *ḥadīths* and *isnāds*, rather than *aḥādīth* and *asānīd*, etc., except where the Arabic plural is the commonly accepted form, as in *ʿulamāʾ* and *akhbār*. Arabic words that are common in English appear with diacritical marks, but are not italicized (eg. Sunnī, sūfī, jihād). The names of cities, countries, and regions appear in their anglicized form, without diacriticals.

Dates appear in the Islamic *hijrī* calendar (A.H.), followed by the Common Era date (C.E.), as in 35/656.

> The absence of narrative capacity or a refusal of narrative indicates an absence or refusal of meaning.[1]

INTRODUCTION: NARRATING ʿUTHMĀN

Introduction

The tension between religious principles and political realities has challenged Muslim societies since the revolt against the third Caliph ʿUthmān divided the early community in 35/656. Subsequent debates over political legitimacy reflect an ongoing struggle for Muslims to find a workable and principled compromise between the political realities of the day and the ideals embodied in the Islamic community established by the prophet Muḥammad in Medina. Living in a constant state of compromise, political thinkers past and present have relied on symbolic continuity with the past to strengthen claims to legitimacy. This is so essential that Muslim politics has been defined as the competition and contest of the interpretation of symbols.[2] The absence of a universally agreed upon basis for political legitimacy in Islamic political culture increases the power of symbolic politics and makes a historiographical study of a symbolically powerful event, like the revolt against ʿUthmān, especially productive.[3]

This study argues that medieval scholars continued to debate the tensions arising from the disparity between early religio-political ideals and contemporary realities. It furthermore seeks to engage and explore how such debates were carried out by historians who edited, selected, and arranged their sources in an ongoing process of reinterpreting the past. I trace a single narrative -- the revolt against the third Caliph ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān -- from the earliest extant sources of the third/ninth century through to the end of the eighth/fourteenth century. By comparing authors within a particular time period and from one period to another, it is clear that the historical literature reflects both the changes in contemporary concerns as well as the opinions of individual authors. Finally, I argue that not only was the past constantly reinterpreted in the historical discourse, but that this discourse was particularly vigorous after the fall of the ʿAbbāsid caliphate in Baghdad in 656/1258. I suggest that the challenges of the seventh/thirteenth century created a crisis of legitimacy which in turn encouraged renewed interest in and re-evaluation of the early Islamic principles and the first crisis that brought them into question, namely the revolt against ʿUthmān.

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[1] Hayden White, "The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality," chap. in *The Content of the Form* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 1-2.

[2] Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori, *Muslim Politics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996), 5. There is a growing awareness of the extent to which this is true of all politics.

[3] Although this may be true for all political culture, it is particularly acute in Islam, in which appeals can always be made not only to an idealized past and principles, but to past personalities and institutions that as a point of faith are believed to have been nearly perfect. See discussion of Fred Donner below and the impact of Qur'anic piety on Islamic historical and moral understanding.

The revolt against the Caliph ʿUthmān was a cataclysmic event in Islamic history. It marked the end of the religio-political balance established by Muḥammad and inaugurated the debate over and quest for authentic Islamic government. It was the first revolt against a Muslim ruler and opened the door to Muslims killing other Muslims. It also led to a series of events that brought about the end of the period of the *Rāshidūn* (rightly guided) Caliphs and shifted the office of the caliphate towards hereditary kingship. The revolt also contributed to the permanent division between Sunnī and Shīʿite Islam. And finally, the two sides in the revolt came to represent in

Islamic collective memory and political discourse one of the key tensions in Islamic government -- justice vs. unity of the community. This tension between unity and justice has been debated ever since, and indeed has yet to be resolved.

In addition to its historical significance, the imagery of ʿUthmān's murder was graphic and moving in such a way that it could take on greater symbolic significance in Islamic collective imagination. Consider the following description of his murder:

> The attackers entered his room and one stabbed him in the face with a stake and ʿUthmān said, "In the name of God! I put my trust in Him." And then the blood flowed down onto his beard and trickled onto the Qur'ān that was between his hands. For he had been reading the Qur'ān and saying, "Praise God the Almighty" when the blood flowed onto the Qur'ān and gurgled up and stopped his speech. The Qur'ān closed and together they struck him as a group. God have mercy upon him.[4]

The contrast between ʿUthmān's piety and the attackers' aggression evidenced here could be manipulated to emphasize or downplay one or the other. In this way, the symbolic power of the event could be continually reinterpreted and redeployed as a commentary on the revolt and the tensions behind it. For example, Tayeb El-Hibri has argued convincingly that ʿAbbāsid chroniclers, through their narration of regicide accounts, were addressing a contemporary core moral problem, "namely whether it is legitimate to use force to depose a reigning monarch, and how this political upheaval can bring a social and religious shakeup in the life and fate of the community."[5] El-

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[4] Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Abī Bakr (d. 741/1340), *al-Tamhīd wa 'l-bayān fī maqtal al-shahīd ʿUthmān Ibn ʿAffān*, ed. Maḥmūd Yūsuf Zāyid (Beirut, 1963), 138. He attributes the account to Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Wāqidī (d. 207/823), but I have not seen this exact account in other redactions of Wāqidī.

[5] Tayeb El-Hibri, *Reinterpreting Islamic Historiography: Hārūn al-Rashīd and the Narrative of the ʿAbbāsid Caliphate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 84.

Hibri's comparative analysis builds on recent developments in the study of ʿAbbāsid historiography.

NARRATIVE IN ʿABBĀSID HISTORIOGRAPHY

Despite the defining nature of the events of the early Islamic period, the view that modern scholars can detect the contemporary concerns of a medieval Muslim historian through his interpretation of those events is a relatively recent development in Islamic historiography. This is due in large part to the very nature of Arabic historical writing. The earliest accounts are 150 years removed from the actual events and most of these sources only survive in redactions found in the first universal chronicles of the third/ninth and fourth/tenth century. Moreover, chroniclers did not write single, smooth narratives, but kept their sources from the preceding century in the form of independent accounts (*khabar*, pl., *akhbār*). These, in turn, begin with a chain of transmitters (*isnād*, pl., *asānīd*) that trace the report from the chronicler back to the first narrator of the account, an eye-witness or contemporary of the event. While the chain of transmitters gives some hope of factual and reliable evidence, the presence of numerous contradictory accounts side-by-side in the chronicles set before scholars, East and West, the task of determining which accounts were more reliable. Furthermore, the *isnād/khabar* format made the third/ninth century ʿAbbāsid chroniclers appear to be nothing more than compilers of earlier sources. They were not viewed as historians who provided any detectable, overarching interpretive framework to their work. Consequently, it was believed new questions and concerns did not enter the historical discourse, making historiographical studies largely irrelevant for understanding the contemporary milieu of the chroniclers themselves.

Western scholars were naturally interested at first in determining what happened in the early, formative years of Islam. They assumed Islamic chroniclers had the same desire. The *isnād/khabar* format, lack of smooth narrative, and presence of contradictory accounts, however, made the task more difficult and the assumption more dubious. The apparent indiscriminate inclusion of accounts led to the belief that traditions carried weight in and of themselves and therefore chroniclers, or compilers as they were so-called, were compelled to include all the traditions, whether they agreed or not.[6] It was assumed that it was the reliability of the transmitters recorded in the *isnād* that held the key to determining which reports were true or false.[7] Close analysis of the *isnāds* led to the theory of groups of transmitters associated with particular geographical areas and that the Medinan "school" appeared less biased than the Iraqi one.[8] But this view did not withstand the shift in focus from the *isnād* of the *khabar* to its content (*matn*).

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[6] Compiler was the commonly used term for chroniclers, although it was Patricia Crone who articulated most strongly the implications of this term. She states, "Muslim tradition was the outcome, not of slow crystallization, but of explosion; the first compilers were not redactors, but collectors of debris whose work are strikingly devoid of overall unity; and no particular illuminations ensue from their comparison." *Slaves on Horses: the Evolution of the Islamic Polity* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 13.

[7] In this scholars were borrowing from the field of *hadīth* studies. See Joseph Schacht, "A Revaluation of Islamic Traditions," *JRAS* (1949): 143-154 and *The Origins of Muhammadan Jurisprudence* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950).

[8] This theory was first put forward by Julius Wellhausen and became the widely supported view, as evidenced in the work of E.J. Petersen and ʿAbd al-Azīz al-Dūrī. Al-Dūrī, *The Rise of Historical Writing among the Arabs*, ed. and trans. Lawrence I. Conrad (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983); Petersen, *ʿAlī and Muʿāwiya in early Arabic Tradition: Studies in the Genesis and Growth of Islamic Historical Writing until the end of the Ninth Century* (Copenhagen: Scandinavian University Books, 1964); Wellhausen, "Die religiös-politischen Oppositionsparteien im alten Islam," in *Abhandlungen der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen*, Phil-hist. Klasse, n.s., 5,

It became increasingly clear that the accounts of early Islamic events carried within them the residue of later religio-political developments.[9] Even so, the focus remained on trying to determine the facts about the past. So after eliminating what appeared to be unreliable transmitters, scholars focused on scraping away what they believed to be later biases and emendations – all in the hope of getting down to the facts. To the extent that *akhbār* did record later historical developments, it was believed that these entered the sources subconsciously, and did not reflect any intentionality on the part of the transmitter or chronicler. In one of the first surveys of Islamic historiography Franz Rosenthal summarized the consensus of the day when he stated: "History was not used as a means for the propagation of ideas, or, more exactly, historians as a rule did not consciously intend, in writing their works, to reinterpret historical data so as to conform to the ideas they might have wished to propagate."[10] But even as he was penning this observation it was coming under attack by the work of Marshall Hodgson and Albrecht Noth.

From his study of two pre-modern Muslim historians, Hodgson concluded that for them "accuracy as to 'fact' was much less important than validity of life vision."[11] Despite the significance of this statement, it was several years before its implications were more fully developed. In the meantime it was the work of Albrecht

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no. 2 (1901), trans. R.C. Ostle and S.M. Walzer as *The Religio-Political Factions in Early Islam* (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Co., 1973); and Wellhausen, *Das arabische Reich und sein Sturtz* (Berlin, 1902), trans. M.G. Weir as *The Arab Kingdom and Its Fall* (Calcutta, 1927).

[9] Wellhausen pointed to this, but E.J. Petersen marked a significant breakthrough when he traced the development of Sunnī and Shīʿite ideology through how the conflict between ʿAlī and Muʿāwiyah was recorded in the second/eighth and third/ninth century sources. Ibid.

[10] Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 2d ed., (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968), 61.

[11] Marshall Hodgson, "Two pre-Modern Muslim historians: Pitfalls and Opportunities in Presenting Them to Moderns," in *Towards World Community*, ed. John Nef, World Academy of Arts and Sciences Publication, vol. 5 (The Hague: Dr. W. Junk N.V. Publishers, 1968), 62.

Noth that caused a pivotal shift in Islamic historiography.[12] His close analysis of *akhbār* revealed ʿAbbāsid chroniclers edited accounts to conform to set literary and religious themes and topoi. His research showed accounts were composed rather than merely compiled. Not only was the evidence that sources were manipulated by chroniclers a significant theoretical breakthrough, but the methods Noth used could be applied to sources from any period.

Nevertheless, conformity to literary forms rather than personal opinion remained the point of departure. Consequently, although an individual *khabar* might be manipulated, the choice to keep accounts in independent *akhbār* prolonged the assertion that there was no larger, over-arching scheme or framework to chronicles as a whole. Thus the transmitters of *akhbār* might be exercising "unavowed authorship,"[13] but chroniclers were not necessarily involved in this process and certainly were not viewed as authors of their histories. Moreover, the primary objective for detecting literary techniques within the *akhbār* was not so much to appreciate them in their own right, but to be able to move beyond or behind them to find "authentic kernels" of facts within the narrative.[14] Nevertheless, by introducing the idea of authorial intent and showing that this was not determined solely or perhaps even primarily by a desire to convey some version of the truth, Noth opened the door to new realms of inquiry and analysis in Islamic historiography.[15]

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[12] Noth's theories were first published in 1973 and then further developed in collaboration with Lawrence Conrad and translated into English by Michael Bonner and published as *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition: A Source-Critical Study* (Princeton: The Darwin Press, Inc., 1994).

[13] Stefan Leder, "The Literary Use of the *Khabar*: A Basic form of Historical Writing," in *The Byzantine and Early Islamic Near East*, vol. 1, *Problems in the Literary Source Material*, ed. Averil Cameron and Lawrence I. Conrad (Princeton: The Darwin Press, Inc. 1992), 284

[14] A trilogy of articles by Stefan Leder have been influential in distinguishing between fact and fiction in the *akhbār*. See "The Literary Use of the *Khabar*;" "Features of the Novel in Early Islamic Historiography: the Downfall of Xālid al-Qasrī," *Oriens* 32 (1990): 72-96; and "The Paradigmatic character of Madâ'inî's shûrâ-narrative," *Studia Islamica* 88 (1998): 35-54.

Using a text critical approach, Jacob Lassner has shown how *akhbār* from the ʿAbbāsid period were altered not only to conform to literary topoi, but political necessity.[16] ʿAbbāsid chroniclers selected and edited accounts in order to meet the current needs of defending the ʿAbbāsid caliphate. Lassner traces the ways in which the ʿAbbāsids rewrote the history of the ʿAbbāsid Revolution (129-132/747-750) in order to legitimize their role over and against their ʿAlid challengers. Demonstrating the ways in which *akhbār* were edited and altered to form consistent political arguments proved that the compilers of these accounts were themselves exercising authorial intent. In this way Lassner helped to move historiographical studies beyond trying to determine "what happened," or which sources are more reliable, to focusing on the "rhetorical strategies employed by ʿAbbāsid writers."[17] Lassner argues that particular ideological messages had to be conveyed subtly so as not to insult or alarm the audience.[18] Although this produces great difficulties for the modern reader, Lassner believes "one may recover some sense of the apologist's intentions by being particularly sensitive to problems of narrative strategy."[19] Thus narrative rather than *akhbār* and the strategies of narrative construction have come to form the locus of historiographical analyses.[20]

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[15] The ability to find authorial intent or historical facts within the accounts was strongly opposed by Patricia Crone and those among what Fred Donner has termed the "skeptical approach" to Islamic sources in his thoughtful and thorough survey of the literature at the beginning of *Narratives of Islamic Origins: the Beginnings of Islamic Historical Writing*, Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1998). In many ways the historigraphical debate has moved beyond questions of fact and fiction to a renewed interest in truth and error in past and present narrative construction. See Hayden White, "Fictions of Factual Representation," chap. in *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), 123. Or consider Michael Cooperson's observation on the need to draw a "distinction between the two meanings of 'fictionality,' namely 'falseness' and the more conspicuously relative concept of 'well-contrivedness.'" Cooperson, "The Heirs of the Prophets in Classical Arabic Biography" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1994), 126. This is not to say that historians have lost interest in what "really happened." Donner provides a compelling "Critique of the Skeptical Approach" (*Narratives of Islamic Origins*, 25-31). It is to be assumed that the ability to do traditional historical research is enhanced by a greater appreciation for and an ability to detect the historical understanding behind the sources.

[16] Jacob Lassner, *Islamic Revolution and Historical Memory: ʿAbbāsid Apologetics and the Art of Historical Writing* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).

[17] Ibid., 32.

The methods of literary analysis applied by Lassner have been echoed recently by Tayeb El-Hibri.[21] Both scholars believe ʿAbbāsid authors conveyed their arguments, indeed their propaganda, through subtlety, word games, pun, and complex stylistic forms. This style of writing was partly due to its inherent intellectual challenge and reward. But it was also grounded in a context in which readers were intimately familiar with the material so that any nuance or alteration in the narrative was detectable. El-Hibri notes that what "underscore[s] one's sense of conscious historical intent" – figurative language, metaphor, irony, symbolism and symmetrical construction – are the very things that complicate the modern reader's ability to discern various sources and opinions.[22] Consequently, El-Hibri focuses "on the nuances in the text and its broader organization, in the hope of gauging broader systems of historical interpretation that are anchored in the vital issues of the time, and of determining how these interpretations cut across the disparate narratives."[23] While Lassner and El-Hibri have explored on a micro level the creative tension between past events and current necessities, Marshall Hodgson and R.Stephen Humphreys have considered on a more macro level the role of past ideals and moral imperatives on ʿAbbāsid historical narratives.

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[18] Ibid., 19. This sounds somewhat like our post-modern "conspiracy of cleverness" in which the audience is more likely to be convinced if they have a smug sense of satisfaction over getting the joke or the hidden meaning. Perhaps it is also no accident that ʿAbbāsid chronicles convey contradictory accounts and post-modernity also elevates the inherent value of narratives over propositional truth claims.

[19] Ibid., 14.

[20] Fred Donner discusses the impact on Islamic historiography of post-modernity in general and narrative studies in particular in his thorough and thoughtful survey of the literature at the beginning of *Narratives of Islamic Origins*. Hayden White has been especially influential in drawing links between literary theory and historiography. See his collections: *Tropics of Discourse* and *The Content of the Form*.

[21] El-Hibri, *Reinterpreting Islamic Historiography*.

[22] Ibid., 14.

In his highly significant article, "Qurʾanic Myth and Narrative Structure in Early Islamic Historiography," R. S. Humphreys states his intent "to put aside the question of whether we can use this historical tradition to construct a valid picture of what really happened. Instead, I hope to identify the general interpretive frameworks that early Muslim historians used to lend form, cohesion, and meaning to the disparate and fragmented materials available to them."[24] In a comparative analysis of three ʿAbbāsid chroniclers, Humphreys concludes that they interpreted history through, and therefore made their narratives conform to, the Qurʾanic myth of Covenant, Betrayal, and Redemption.[25] Not only does Humphreys' study give insight into ʿAbbāsid narrative strategies, it highlights the moral dimension of ʿAbbāsid historical discourse.[26] Chroniclers were constrained not only by literary schema and political propaganda, but the tension between past political and religious ideals and current realities.

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[23] Ibid., 15.

[24] R. Stephen Humphreys, "Qur'anic Myth and Narrative Structure in Early Islamic Historiography," in *Tradition and Innovation in Late Antiquity*, ed. F.M. Clover and R.S. Humphreys (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 272.

[25] Fred Donner also looks at the impact of Qur'anic models of morality on historiographic inquiry in *Narratives of Islamic Origins*, 75-125, to be discussed further below.

[26] Humphreys' analysis reflects a wider call for a renewed recognition and appreciation of the moral dimension in historiography past and present. See Hayden White, "The Burden of History," in *Tropics of Discourse*, 47-50 and "The Value of Narrativity" in *The Content of the Form*, in which he states: "Where, in any account of reality, narrativity is present, we can be sure that morality or a moralizing impulse is present too." Ibid., 24.

According to Hodgson and Humphreys the question consuming historians such as Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) was how to reconcile the contemporary caliphate with the religio-political ideals of the Qurʾān and Muḥammad's Medina.[27] This tension was first noted by Hodgson in his analysis of al-Ṭabarī in which he concluded al-Ṭabarī was motivated by the problem of "how to control power *for the sake of a dynamic idealism.*"[28] The Islamic ideals of a just and unified community could not be limited to the past for they were the foundations of legitimate Islamic government and Islamic society. In order to hold on to those ideals despite the failures of the ʿAbbāsid Caliphate, Hodgson sees al-Ṭabarī repeatedly emphasizing how the law could both limit caliphal authority and perpetuate the ideals of unity and justice. Humphreys as well sees the appeal of past ideals as encouraging a belief in historical dynamism through the Covenant-Betrayal-Redemption framework. This model enabled historians to reconcile themselves to present shortcomings while holding on to the belief that God could and would redeem His community. Unlike Hodgson, Humphreys does not put forward how al-Ṭabarī or other historians thought this would happen. Rather his point is that the gulf between past and present that was previously believed to make Islamic history stagnant and unproductive was actually a source of productive dynamism in the historical discourse.[29]

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[27] Hodgson, "Two pre-Modern Muslim Historians" and Humphreys, "Qur'anic Myth."
[28] Ibid., 58. Emphasis in the original.

Evidence of authorial design now embraces not only the individual *khabar*, but narrative units, and chronicles as a whole.[30] Chroniclers not only edited, but selected and arranged their sources in such a way as to present larger arguments and interpretations. There is now much greater appreciation for the ʿAbbāsid chroniclers' ability to give their own views greater legitimacy by appearing to cite earlier authorities through their use of the *isnād/khabar* format, while all the while engaging in contemporary debates and responding to contemporary concerns through subtly reinterpreting the past. Moreover, it is now generally recognized that this process was motivated by literary, political, religious, and moral concerns.

So much work has now been done on early Islamic historiography in the ʿAbbāsid sources that articles like Tayob I. Abdelkader's "Ṭabarī on the Companions of the Prophet: Moral and Political Contours in Islamic Historical Writing" have become commonplace.[31] Thus far, however, such detailed studies have focused almost exclusively on chronicles from the ʿAbbāsid period, primarily the third/ninth and fourth/tenth centuries.[32] There is general acceptance of Abdelkader's assertion:

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[29] Humphreys specifically refutes Franz Rosenthal and John Wansbrough's assertion that the "Muslim view of early Islamic history was static and unproductive." "Qur'anic Myth," 281.
[30] For example in Marianne Engle Cameron's recent article she refers to Ṭabarī and Ibn ʿAsākir as "author/compilers." "Sayf at First: The Transmission of Sayf ibn ʿUmar in al-Ṭabarī and Ibn ʿAsākir," in *Ibn ʿAsākir and Early Islamic History*, ed. James E. Lindsay, Studies in Late Antiquity and Early Islam 20 (Princeton: The Darwin Press, Inc., 2001), 74.
[31] Tayob I. Abdelkader, "Ṭabarī on the Companions of the Prophet: Moral and Political Contours in Islamic Historical Writing," *JAOS* 119:2 (1999): 203-210.
[32] James Lindsay's article "Caliphal and Moral Examplar? ʿAlī ibn ʿAsākir's Portrait of Yazīd b. Muʿāwiya," *Der Islam* 74 (1997): 250-278 also reflects recent detections of a moral imperative behind Islamic historiography and is one of the first to apply such narrative analyses to a post-Ṭabarī source.

"A methodological reading of an event discloses the intentions and strategies of an astute Muslim historian such as Ṭabarī."[33] But actual scholarship suggests that few historians are believed to be as "astute" as Ṭabarī. This is in part due, once again, to unique aspects of medieval Arab historical writing. As the historians of the ninth and tenth centuries appeared to be primarily compilers, so those of the later medieval period appeared to merely paraphrase and summarize the syntheses of al-Ṭabarī and his contemporaries, while focusing their attention on more contemporary events.

But when ʿAbbāsid chroniclers were shown to be more than compilers why were not the same methods applied to reveal later chroniclers as more than "summarizers"? The answer lies in part in the explanations given as to why chroniclers chose to summarize al-Ṭabarī in the first place. In part this was attributed to al-Ṭabarī's superiority as a historian and to legitimacy based on past authorities. However, it was believed as well that al-Ṭabarī was one of the last to wrestle in a dynamic way with the tensions arising from early Islamic history and that subsequent writers could not resolve the tensions and therefore chose not to engage them. As the contemporary situation became further and further removed from the founding principles of justice and unity, so the argument goes, scholars chose to surrender extreme idealism for extreme pragmatism.

The belief that historians after al-Ṭabarī merely paraphrased and summarized his universal history for the early Islamic period and then turned their efforts to contemporary events has gone largely unchallenged to the present day. Rosenthal's assertion, "the attitude of the early ʿAbbāsid historians became the standard for later historiography as late as the fifteenth century"[34] remains the dominant view. It has been echoed as recently and definitively as R.S. Humphreys' article on "Taʾrīkh" in the second edition of *The Encylopaedia of Islam*. Humphreys states:

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[33] Abdelkader, "Ṭabarī on the Companions," 209.

> After al-Ṭabarī, only a few historians are still interested in seeking out new materials on the first 250 years of Islamic history. The crucial question confronting 3rd/9th-century historians – had been the legitimacy of the ʿAbbāsid Caliphate – and more broadly, the fundamental legitimacy of the religious and political evolution of the *umma* [Islamic community] as a whole. After the political catastrophes of the caliphate of al-Muḳtadir (295-320/908-32), however, these issues no longer seemed urgent and compelling. Henceforth, early Islamic history was typically covered through paraphrases or abridgments of al-Ṭabarī.[35]

But it is not necessary to assume that the absence of "new materials" meant the absence of interest in the issues of early Islamic history. We have seen how deference to past authorities did not hinder debate in the ʿAbbāsid period. Just as ʿAbbāsid historians could select and second/eighth century sources in order to convey their own opinions, later historians could selectively paraphrase and abridge al-Ṭabarī.

LOOKING FOR NARRATIVE IN POST-ṬABARĪ HISTORIOGRAPHY

This project argues that interest in early Islamic history did not end with al-Ṭabarī and the crises of the tenth century. Historians continued to engage their past in order to make meaning of their present. We can trace how they continued to find and debate various compromises between past ideals and current realities through how they portrayed the critical event which in many ways marked the shift from the former to the latter – the revolt against ʿUthmān. The comparative conservatism in the historical discourse after al-Ṭabarī should not be viewed as indifference or acquiescence. A comparative approach shows this conservatism to have been a period of retrenchment by the Sunnī community during a period of Shīʿite dominance. Moreover, it was not expressed through reliance on al-Ṭabarī, but the more hagiographic *ḥadīth*[36] literature used in biographical dictionaries. It is only in the late sixth/twelfth century that we see a return to annalistic chronicles and al-Ṭabarī; this is not stagnation, but a renewed interest in early Islamic history encouraged by the crises and triumphs of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Finally, in the Baḥrī Mamlūk period (648-784/1250-1382), we see not only a renewed, but a re-invigorated historical discourse characterized by creative use of al-Ṭabarī and other early sources. The Mongol invasions, the destruction of the ʿAbbāsid caliphate, and the rise of Mamlūk rule in Cairo caused a re-evaluation of the very foundations of Islamic religio-political principles. This is reflected in the historical discourse in a renewed desire to find compromises that would not completely abandon the principles of unity and justice which were the basis of legitimacy for the Islamic community.

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[34] Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 63.
[35] Humphreys, "Taʾrīkh," *EI²*.

Although there is a growing number of post-Ṭabarī studies which undermine the thesis of repetition and stagnation, they have yet to cause a fundamental shift in the study of Islamic historiography. The earliest studies were fairly traditional analyses of the life and times of a particular historian, such as ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn al-Masʿūdī (d. 345/956) or Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Miskawayh (d. 420/1030).[37] But the conclusion was that they were exceptional or transitional figures before a re-assertion of the dominant narrative presented by al-Ṭabarī. Even Marilyn Waldman's more theoretical analysis of Bayhaqī's (d. 470/1077) *Ta'rīkh* has not shaken the pre/post-Ṭabarī paradigm.[38] Tarif Khalidi, whose recent *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period* shows very clearly how new paradigms continued to infuse the historical discourse, nevertheless echoes the view that when it came to the controversial aspects of early Islamic history, scholars had little choice but to keep quiet.[39] The same year as his publication however, Denise Spellberg published a study on the legacy of the very controversial favorite wife of the Prophet, ʿĀʾishah bint Abī Bakr.[40] She analyzes how medieval Sunnī scholars worked to reconcile the controversial character of ʿĀʾishah with the gender ideals of the time. Despite clear evidence of ongoing debate and manipulation of the historical discourse, the consensus seems to have been that ʿĀʾishah is *sui generis* -- the exception that proves the rule. Michael Cooperson, however, has recently done a similar analysis of change over time in the biographies of four key historical figures.[41] My analysis of the narrative of ʿUthmān builds on these studies in an effort to apply more systematically methods developed and insights drawn from ʿAbbāsid historiography to later periods.

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[36] *Ḥadīth*, pl., *aḥādīth*, can mean "sayings" or "account" and could thereby be confused with *khabar*, but it is more commonly understood to refer to the sayings and doings of the Prophet Muḥammad. *Ḥadīth* also can include the sayings of Muḥammad's Companions, but whenever I use *ḥadīth*, I am referring specifically to those attributed to the Prophet, and thus carrying the greatest authority.

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[37] Tarif Khalidi, *Islamic Historiography: The Histories of al-Masʿūdī* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1975); M.S. Khan, "Miskawayh and the Buwayhids," *Oriens* 21-22 (1968-1969): 235-247 and M.S. Khan, *Studies in Miskawayh's Contemporary History (340-369 A.H.)* (Chicago: Center for Middle Eastern Studies, The University of Chicago, 1980).

[38] She laments the fact that historians who do not fit the mold are seen as merely exceptions. Marilyn Waldman, *Toward a Theory of Historical Narrative: A Case Study in Perso-Islamicate Historiography* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1980), 5.

[39] Tarif Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 226.

[40] Denise Spellberg, *Politics, Gender, and the Islamic Past: The Legacy of ʿAʾisha bint Abi Bakr* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

Spellberg's work shows how one person or event can be used as a window onto larger issues, tracing change over time, and how this was conveyed through creative reinterpretation by medieval writers. She states her work is not a biography, "but a critical inquiry into the implications of a woman's life, this work may be categorized as a study of Muslim historiography refracted through the example of ʿA'isha bint Abi Bakr."[42] Like her, I do not write a history of the revolt against ʿUthmān, but analyze how later Muslims understood the implications of the event. Just as Spellberg analyzes the efforts of medieval Muslims to reconcile the person of ʿĀ'ishah to traditional Arab and Muslim views of the ideal woman, I analyze the efforts of medieval Muslims to reconcile the implications of the revolt against ʿUthmān to the ideals of a unified and just Islamic government. While ʿUthmān may be viewed as being as exceptional a character as ʿĀ'ishah, enough studies of particular narratives and authors are now coming together to suggest that dynamism and debate was the norm rather than the exception in medieval Islamic historical discourse.

Perhaps the most significant work on post-Ṭabarī historiography is Tarif Khalidi's *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period.*[43] Khalidi divides up

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[41] Michael Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography: the Heirs of the Prophets in the Age of al-Ma'mūn* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[42] Spellberg, *Politics, Gender, and the Islamic Past*, 23.

[43] In Chase Robinson's recent article "The Study of Islamic Historiography: a Progress Report," *JRAS* series 3, 7:2 (1997): 199-228, he discusses only Khalidi's *Arabic Historical Thought* and Albrecht Noth's *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition*, both published in 1994.

Islamic historiography into four "epistemic domes" that shaped historical narratives and were dominant in four successive periods.[44] These were *ḥadīth*, or the sacred 'traditions', *adab*, or Belles-Lettres, *ḥikmah*, or the natural and social sciences, and *siyāsah*, or political theory and practice. The age of *ḥadīth* covers the second/eighth and third/ninth centuries and corroborates Humphreys' point about Qur'anic frameworks. *Adab* and *ḥikmah* characterize the tenth and eleventh centuries and concur with the growing influence of extra-Qur'anic models and the interest in secular history and contemporary events. Khalidi describes the historiography of the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries as "*siyasa*-oriented."[45] This was brought about not only by a close relationship between the *ʿulamāʾ*[46] and the court, but a growing self-awareness on the part of the *ʿulamāʾ*, and a growing desire on the part of the rulers to control knowledge. The effort to cover so much ground naturally limited Khalidi's ability to do close textual analysis. Although his detection and description of stylistic shifts in the historical discourse is significant, generalizations and categories that stretch over four centuries demand further qualification.[47]

I utilize, but do not follow, Khalidi's periodization for my own work in moving the scholarship beyond the ʿAbbāsid period. For example, he gives greater attention to earlier developments; between the second/eighth and fourth/tenth centuries we see the interplay of three distinct modes: *ḥadīth*, *adab*, and *ḥikmah*, while the fifth/eleventh to ninth/fifteenth centuries are characterized under *siyāsah*. In contrast, I am particularly interested in the later period, having found not only ongoing dynamism, but a re-invigorated historical discourse in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Between the tenth and twelfth centuries historical discourse was characterized by secularization, consolidation, and legalization.[48] The impact of science, *adab*, philosophy, and *Realpolitik* encouraged secularization. Historians, in addition to drawing upon Qurʾanic models and a desire to draw moral lessons from the past, wanted to convey practical lessons in an engaging and entertaining way.[49] Mitigating this trend to some extent was the consolidation of the Sunnī and Shīʿite religio-political positions.

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[44] Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought*, 232.
[45] Ibid., 184.
[46] *ʿUlamāʾ* (sing., *ʿālim*) is used generally to refer to the collective of medieval Islamic scholars and jurists.
[47] Admittedly my own work that narrows the field to century-long characterizations is only one step in an ongoing process towards greater understanding and specificity.

The period from the mid fourth/tenth to mid sixth/twelfth century also saw the dominance of Shīʿism from the Būyids in Baghdad to the Fāṭimids in Cairo. This encouraged a Sunnī conservative reaction.[50] This reaction encouraged an emphasis on biography rather than annalistic chronicles. Biographies lent themselves more readily to hagiographic treatments and avoided tricky issues of historical causation and accountability. While scholars have acknowledged the rise of biographical dictionaries and regional or dynastic histories, they have failed to make the corollary observation that the central and western Islamic lands failed to produce a single universal history from Miskawayh (d. 420/1030) to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1201).[51] Finally, this period can be characterized by the growing authority of the legal sciences which meant a constrained discourse should not be read as acquiescence, but a part of the "legal imperative" for order.[52]

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[48] Muhammad Arkoun, *Contribution à l'étude de l'humanisme arabe au IVᵉ/Xᵉ siècle; Miskawayh (320/325-421), philosophe et historien* (Paris: Etudes Musulmanes 12, 1970); Michael Cooperson, "The Heirs of the Prophets in Classical Arabic Biography" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard, 1994); Joel Kraemer, *Humanism in Renaissance of Islam: the Cultural Revival in the Buyid Age* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986); Khalidi, *Islamic Historiography* and *Arabic Historical Thought.*

[49] Ibid.

[50] Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography* and George Makdisi, "The Sunnī Revival," in *Islamic Civilization, 950-1150*, Papers on Islamic History III, ed. D.H. Richards, 155-168 (Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, 1973; reprinted in George Makdisi, *History and Politics in Eleventh-Century Baghdad*, London: Variorum, 1990).

In *Classical Arabic Biography* Michael Cooperson traces the changing perceptions in the biographical literature of the Caliph al-Maʾmūn, the Traditionist Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, the Shiʾite Imām ʿAlī al-Riḍā, and the Ṣūfī Bishr al-Ḥāfī. In the portrayal of al-Maʾmūn, Cooperson finds a more realistic or pragmatic approach in the tenth century replaced by an idealized one in the eleventh and twelfth. For example, al-Masʿūdī records a confrontation between al-Maʾmūn and a Ṣūfī in which his speech makes no reference to a rightly guided imāmate, only to a sort of trial-and-error meritocracy.[53] Cooperson sees, however, a subsequent "Sunnī revival" of al-Maʾmūn in which he is portrayed as a scholar of *ḥadīth* and defender of the *sunnah*.[54] Cooperson believes the change began in *Taʾrīkh Baghdad* by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdadī (d. 463/1071) and reached maturity in Ibn ʿAsākir's (d. 571/1175) *Taʾrīkh madīnat Dimashq*.[55] This need to portray key and controversial figures from early Islamic history in idealized religious terms is repeated in my own findings in the narrative of ʿUthmān.

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[51] This gap in the literature is especially noticeable when contrasted with the number of universal and Islamic histories produced in the ninth and tenth centuries and then again in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

[52] This is the main argument in Khaled Abou El Fadl's recent seminal study, *Rebellion & Violence in Islamic Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001; reprint, 2002).

[53] Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography*, 50

[54] The example or model for the life of the community based on the speech and behavior of Muḥammad (and to a lesser extent his Companions) transmitted in the *ḥadīth* literature.

[55] Ibid., 53.

For a long time it was this very conservatism that encouraged a belief in quietism and acquiescence. But it should also be seen as a pro-active response to contemporary circumstances. Recently Khaled Abou El Fadl has challenged assumptions of what it is activist and quietist. Abou El Fadl traces the legal discourse and development of laws on rebellion in the medieval period. He takes issue with "the often-reached conclusions about Muslim legal history that Muslim jurists were realists and quietists. Muslim jurists, it is often argued, traded in an extreme form of political idealism for an equally extreme form of political pragmatism, and in doing so, have advocated politically passive or quietist positions."[56] He undermines this position first by placing laws and legal discourse within its proper context of a "legal imperative,"[57] which by the very nature of law, "favors order and stability. But order and stability is the framework from which law begins, and then aspires to achieve certain social and political goals."[58] "Hence, when Muslim jurists argue that the adjudications and legal acts of rebels must be recognized, they are not, as some contemporary scholars assume, being opportunistic or exhibiting a realistic, as opposed to a legalistic trend. Rather, perhaps in the interests of justice, they are re-establishing order and minimizing disorder."[59]

Khaled Abou El Fadl concludes: "Fundamentally, the balance of social or moral evils doctrine leaves open the possibility of disobedience or rebellion. In other words, it does not preclude disobedience or rebellion because order and stability are not the only relevant moral considerations."[60] Thus Abou El Fadl shows in the legal discourse on rebellion ongoing debate between appeals to various moral, religious, and political principles and needs. Legal ways of negotiating competing principles such as unity and justice is evidenced in jurists' arguments for the distinction between rebel and brigand, through which they could legitimate to a certain extent rebellion against unjust rulers. He notes that some jurists went so far as to argue that it was the unjust ruler who was the true rebel.[61] More specifically, Abou El Fadl's research shows that concern over the legitimacy of rebellion against the unjust ruler not only remained a contested issue, but became more open to new interpretations after the fall of the ʿAbbāsid caliphate in the mid seventh/thirteenth century.[62]

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[56] Abou El Fadl, *Rebellion & Violence*, 4.
[57] Ibid., 22.
[58] Abou El Fadl, "The Islamic Law of Rebellion: The Rise and Development of the Juristic Discourses on Insurrection, Insurgency and Brigandage" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1999), 19.
[59] Ibid., 30.

Michael Cook's recent study on the Islamic injunction to command right and forbid wrong shows more subtle fluctuations in the legal discourse.[63] He finds that even though the conclusions drawn by jurists usually rejected rebellion against an unjust ruler, it was the product of legal discourse rather than quietism or acquiescence. Cook observes scholars negotiating conflicting values and debating points of detail such as the power of the wrongdoer and the accuser, the chance of success, and the risk of greater danger to oneself, others, or the community at large. So that when rebellion against an unjust ruler was forbidden, often it was based on the perceived greater threat posed by *fitnah* (pl. *fitan*: severe trial, social chaos, civil war). Similarly, when it came to confronting an unjust ruler, scholars weighed the injunction to forbid wrong with the Qurʾanic verse: "Cast not yourselves by your own hand into destruction."[64] But even with this injunction, Cook observes that Abū Ḥamīd al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), for example, appealed to the tradition that whereas one should not bring others into danger, if one loses his own life or suffers personally for confronting an unjust ruler, it is a virtue and one's death would constitute martyrdom. By al-Ghazālī's own time, he did not think the quality of leadership had deteriorated so much as the religious scholars who had failed to uphold their duty of guiding and rebuking the ruler.[65] Cook concludes, "with regard to forbidding wrong in the face of the delinquency of the ruler, there is a clear mainstream position: rebuke is endorsed while rebellion is rejected."[66]

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[60] Abou El Fadl, *Rebellion & Violence*, 30.
[61] Ibid., 280-294.
[62] Ibid.
[63] Michael Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

Both Cook and Abou El Fadl's works show that legal writing was one way scholars could carry on nuanced debates about the tension between religio-political ideals and more sobering realities. They also point to a legalizing of culture; focusing on particulars may not have been sidestepping the issues at all, but a working out of them. Although there are technicalities of legal discourse, I believe the same could be said for historical discourse. How historians selected, edited, and arranged their sources enabled them to carry on debates with their peers, progenitors, and successors.

Tarif Khalidi's fourth and final epistemic dome characterizes the historiography of the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries as primarily *siyāsah*-oriented.

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[64] Q 2:195.
[65] Cook, *Commanding Right*, 446.
[66] Ibid., 479.

Khalidi suggests that during this period the close relationship between the rulers and the ʿ*ulamāʾ* meant that the production of knowledge, including knowledge about the past, was strongly influenced by the needs of the government. According to Khalidi this became the dominant characteristic of Islamic historiography during the Crusader period and culminated under the Mamlūks (648-922/1250-1517). Indeed we do see during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, in addition to biographies, a flourishing of dynastic and regional histories. Chroniclers were often court historians who compared the triumphs of their patrons with the triumphs of the first conquests (*futūḥ*). Thus, what Khalidi terms a "then-and-now" historical perspective dominated Islamic historiography from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries.[67]

Whereas Khalidi emphasizes continuity in the role of the ʿ*ulamāʾ* and the past in shaping the historiography of this period, I see discontinuity. Khalidi describes the ʿ*ulamāʾ* becoming gradually more self-aware and assertive, but I see the ʿ*ulamāʾ* of the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries as far more critical and independent than their predecessors or successors.[68] On the one hand there was a close relationship between those in power and the ʿ*ulamāʾ* as legitimizers and servants of the state, something Khalidi sees as the epitomy of "*siyasa*-oriented historiography."[69] The dubious legitimacy of the Mamlūks strengthened even further the position of the ʿ*ulamāʾ*,[70] but it also encouraged greater distance and potential criticism as the *ʿulamāʾ* increasingly saw themselves as definers and defenders of the Islamic past, not only from outside threats, but the Mamlūk rulers themselves.[71] Moreover, Khalidi's then-and-now perspective fails to address significant shifts in the historical discourse from the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries. A then-and-now perspective means not only that the present was interpreted in light of the past, but that the past was re-interpreted in light of the present.

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[67] Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought,* 184.
[68] Ibid., 201.
[69] Ibid., 200.
[70] Ira Lapidus describes the situation thus: "Standing astride the two realms of state and society, they [the ʿ*ulamāʾ*] became the intermediaries for the economic and social exchanges by which the Mamlūks penetrated the urban world to draw forth its resources and by which the urban economy adjusted itself to the all-powerful presence of the Mamlūk state." Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 130.

Michael Cooperson notes a greater self-awareness on the part from the *ʿulamāʾ* of the Mamlūk period encouraged them to be more critical of the past. Cooperson finds in the introductions to biographical dictionaries and histories from the Mamlūk period, the *ʿulamāʾ* expressing a greater sense of obligation both to their subjects and to their readers.[72] On the one hand this continued to put restrictions on their ability or desire to criticize those who could no longer defend themselves. But on the other hand, it engendered a greater willingness to be critical in order to place events and individuals in their proper historical perspective. For example, Cooperson notes whereas the Caliph al-Maʾmūn was portrayed in the fifth/eleventh century as a pillar of *ḥadīth* scholarship,

> The Mamlūk-period accounts of al-Maʾmūn's career demonstrate that biographers did not confine themselves to commenting upon and correcting older biographies. Rather, they used the genre to re-evaluate their subjects' careers in light of reports they found in the annals, producing in the process a reinterpretation of the historical events themselves. As heirs to the labors of their predecessors, al-Dhahabī, al-Subkī, and al-Suyūṭī had no choice but to

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[71] Jonathan Berkey, "The Mamluks as Muslims: the Military Elite and the Construction of Islam in Medieval Egypt," in *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society*, ed. Thomas Phillip and Ulrich Haarmann, 163-173 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
[72] Cooperson, "The Heirs of the Prophets," 128-162.

> credit the fifth/eleventh century transformation of al-Ma'mūn into a ḥadīth-scholar. They dutifully reproduced the reports that credit the caliph with expertise in ḥadīth. But their commitment to exposing the 'character and disposition' of their subjects led them to consider *all* the available evidence, including the caliph's interest in philosophy, his appointment of al-Riḍā, and his belief in the uncreatedness of the Qur'ān. As a result, they were able to undo, or at least put into unflattering perspective, the centuries-old misrepresentation of al-Ma'mūn as a pillar of ḥadīth. This re-evaluation, in turn, restored to the *miḥna* its full significance as a formative crisis in the relationship between the scholars and the state.[73]

Similarly, in the case of Ibn Ḥanbal, "Mamlūk-period biographers use their entries on Ibn Ḥanbal to place the Inquisition within a broader historical context. They argue that the caliphs, with the possible exception of al-Ma'mūn, were not evil; rather, they were misled by heretical scholars."[74] Finally,

> Late Sunnī biographers, including the Mamlūk-period authorities, continued to represent Ibn Ḥanbal as the champion of Sunnism against the deadly heresy of the Inquisition. But they did not blame the ʿAbbāsid caliphate, or question his heirship to the Prophet. Rather, they depicted al-Ma'mūn as an exception to the rule. Many, moreover, took pains to point out the baleful influence of the court theologians, without whom the caliphs would never have dared abuse Ibn Ḥanbal. The result of these reformulations is a division of labor that echoes actual arrangements in the Mamlūk period: a figurehead caliph, a sultan with (theoretically) limited juristic authority, and a scholarly class that enjoyed a (theoretical) monopoly on interpretive authority.[75]

Thus while Khalidi notes how the present was interpreted in light of the past, Cooperson also sees the past being reinterpreted in light of the present. Cooperson and Spellberg are among the few who have embarked on such an analysis.

Both Cooperson and Spellberg note a shift in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries away from a focus on tensions within the Islamic community to a focus on external threats to the Islamic community as a whole. Michael Cooperson argues that the original purpose of biographical dictionaries was to legitimate a group's claim to be the "heirs of the Prophet" vis-à-vis rival claimants, such as Sunnī Caliphs vs. Shīʿite Imāms, Ḥanbalī scholars vs. Sufis, etc. However, biographical dictionaries like those of Ibn Khallikān (d. 681/1282), Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348), and Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl b. Aybak al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363) marked a break from the *ṭāʾifah* (group)-model of biography. Instead these later biographical dictionaries "contrast[ed] the Muslim community as a whole with rival communities."[76] At the same time Denise Spellberg sees a shift away from Sunnī-Shīʿite debates over the controversial aspects of ʿĀʾishah's legacy. Instead,

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[73] Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography*, 66.
[74] Ibid., 152-3.
[75] Ibid., 191.

> In the eighth/fourteenth century a geographical shift occurs in the locus of additional works concerning ʿAʾisha's legacy. Most of the sources generated about ʿAʾisha after that time are the product of the Egyptian and Syrian-based urban scholarly elite who had survived the Mongol onslaught. These later works represent a brief period of primary emphasis on ʿAʾisha as a source of hadith, a symbol of the survival of Sunnī Muslim civilization and communal memory.[77]

Spellberg and Cooperson both note that outside threats to the Islamic community in the thirteenth century encouraged a renewed interest in the community as a whole and thus its legitimating foundations. A community's identity and legitimacy often depends on defining figures and events which take on symbolic significance. As symbols, however, they are open to redefinition and thus vulnerable and valuable to contemporary needs of the community.

COMMUNITY & MEMORY

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[76] Cooperson, "The Heirs of the Prophets," 137.
[77] Spellberg, *Politics, Gender, and the Islamic Past*, 25.

The relationship between the present and the past of a community is generally agreed to be a contested space influenced by collective memory. A community's collective memory limits the reliability of historical information about an event, but at the same time provides historical insight into how an event was conceptualized and how its symbolic significance was transformed over time. According to Maurice Halbwachs, "Even at the moment of reproducing the past our imagination remains under the influence of the present social milieu."[78] Noa Gedi and Yigal Elam scrutinize the implications of Halbwachs' theory and conclude that for him, "society 'intervenes' in the individual's memory and molds it according to its 'rational needs.' Society is thus capable of reconstructing its past at any given moment. The past becomes, through this process, a reflection of society's needs rather than a reflection of the real events which once took place."[79] Gedi and Elam consequently take issue with Halbwachs' theory of collective memory, concluding that it is simply another expression for "myth" and thus undermines the distinction between history (what really happened) and myth.[80] The notion of collective memory, however, can help negotiate rather than blur this distinction when it is seen as a framework within which historical events are placed in order to give them meaning for the community.[81]

Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* and Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's *The Invention of Tradition* have altered how we understand communal identity and the role of history within it.[82] Anderson discusses how communities are the product of the imagination working to hold together groups of people through space and time. When considering the great religious communities of the pre-modern period -- Christian, Islamic, and Buddhist – he states they "were imaginable largely through the medium of a sacred language and written script."[83] In addition to sacred language and sacred texts, sacred history plays an important role in shaping and perpetuating communal identity. For example, how one understands the nature and role of the Islamic community (*ummah*) is shaped largely by what one "knows" about the life of Muḥammad and his Companions. In fact, a community invents memories, or traditions, in order to link current views and policies with the past, and thereby "use(s) history as a legitimator of action and a cement of group cohesion."[84] This involves not only remembering, but also forgetting. "As Mary Douglas explained, nations keep shape by molding their citizens' understanding of the past, causing its members to forget those events that do not accord with its righteous image while keeping alive those memories that do."[85] If this is true for nation states, how much more is it the case for religious communities?

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[78] Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, ed. and trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 49.
[79] Noa Gedi and Yigal Elam, "Collective Memory -- What is it?" *History & Memory* 8:1 (Spring 1996): 39-40.
[80] Ibid., 46-7.
[81] Consider Humphreys' observations on the Qur'anic myth of Covenant-Betrayal-Redemption.

In Fred Donner's recent analysis of early Islamic historiography, he asserts that the righteousness portrayed in the Qur'ān not only affected Islamic morality, but

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[82] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso Press, 1983; revised 1991; reprint, 1995); Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983; reprint, 1996).

[83] Anderson, 12-13 (page references are to reprint edition).

[84] Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, 12 (page references are to reprint edition).

[85] Mary Douglas, *How Institutions Think* (Syracuse, 1986) cited without additional bibliographic information in Joyce Appleby, Lynn Hunt, and Margaret Jones, *Telling the Truth about History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1994), 297.

Islamic historiography. He believes the a-historicity of Qur'anic piety discouraged interest in history so that history only became important later as a legitimizing tool. Narratives in the Qur'ān are morally simplified with characters clearly defined as good or bad, ideal types rather than real human beings with real struggles. Donner notes that within the Qur'ān "There is little appreciation of the human moral struggle in its own right; there is only concern for its outcome."[86] He concludes that a lack of interest in humanity's moral struggle led to a lack of interest in the human story, or history. Consequently, history only became interesting as a means of legitimating either the Muslim community as a whole or one faction or group against another. Only then did what happened in the past become important. Donner traces this development from early historical records in which legitimacy was found in personal piety, genealogy, or God's will, to the beginnings of historical writing in the second/eighth and third/ninth centuries. It was during this period that the various religio-political factions increasingly based their legitimacy on particular narratives about the past.[87] The close relationship between Islamic historiography and legitimacy also meant there was a close relationship between Islamic historiography and Islamic religio-political ideals of unity and justice.

The close linkage between history and memory and the powerful linguistic and symbolic aspects of political culture is a growing part of historiographic studies generally. Political culture is the arena in which political actors appeal to cultural representations in order to legitimize their claims. As Keith Michael Baker notes,

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[86] Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins*, 76.
[87] Ibid., 118.

"Such claims can be made intelligible and binding only to the extent that political actors deploy symbolic resources held in common by members of the political society, thereby refining, and redefining, the implications of these resources for the changing purposes of political practice."[88] Due to the trends mentioned above, however, recognition of change within the historical discourse is still new in Islamic historiography.

Donner agrees with the long accepted assertion that historical themes and sources were largely set by the fourth/tenth century. What is new, however, and reflects very recent developments in the field of Islamic historiography, is his later admission that "after that time the purveyors of narratives of Islamic origins continued to develop the material by reorganizing, recombining, or reinterpreting it."[89] So far studies on political culture and the role of symbols within it have made only limited inroads into Medieval Middle Eastern history.[90] I believe further exploration within the context of the religio-political formations of medieval Islamic societies can shed more light on this growing field of political culture. The revolt against ʿUthmān fits perfectly into this framework as a historical event and a cultural creation. My analysis of medieval Islamic chronicles and treatises will illustrate how this event provided an arena for debating the tension between adherence to strict principles and accommodation to political realities by “refining and redefining” the implications of the revolt.

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[88] Keith Michael Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution: Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 32.

[89] Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins*, 144-5.

[90] Two significant studies are Paula Sanders, *Ritual Politics and the City in Fāṭimid Cairo* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994) and Janina Safran, *The Second Umayyad Caliphate: The Articulation of Caliphal Legitimacy in al-Andalus*, Harvard Middle Eastern Monographs XXXIII (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000).

REMEMBERING ʿUTHMĀN

The historic and symbolic significance of ʿUthmān’s caliphate and the revolt against him was mentioned briefly at the beginning of this chapter. ʿAbbāsid sources like al-Ṭabarī and Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā al-Balādhurī (d. c. 279/892) deal at great length with the revolt against ʿUthmān. Orientalist scholars picked up the cue from the Arabic sources and also tried to explain how this catastrophe befell the Islamic community. Relying primarily on al-Ṭabarī’s *Ta’rīkh*, what did the first wave of western historians conclude? First, as the second Caliph, ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb, lay dying after being mortally wounded by an assassin, he designated six of Muḥammad’s Companions to form a council and insisted that by the end of the third day they must choose one of their members to be the next caliph. From this consultation (*shūrā*) ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān was chosen – not without controversy. For the first six years of his reign ʿUthmān appeared to follow the examples of his two predecessors and all went well. In the second half of his reign, however, he was accused of appointing family members to key government posts, using the public treasury for personal use, changing the prayer ritual, and destroying the Qur’ān.[91] This led to growing disturbances, particularly in the provinces of Kufa, Egypt, and Basra. Delegates from these three garrison cities went to Medina to confront ᶜUthmān; he prevaricated and was put under siege. Tensions heighten and culminated in his brutal assassination.

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[91] ʿUthmān ordered the establishment of a single, authoritative reading of the Qur’ān and had the variant readings destroyed. This is the same Qur’ān used today.

As mentioned above, however, ᶜAbbāsid chroniclers included contradictory reports side by side in their narratives. At first Western scholars chose those that seemed the most plausible and free of later biases. They tried to ignore what appeared to be anachronistic embellishments, but accepted the overall view that it was religio-political tensions that brought about the conflict. H.A.R. Gibb moved away from this slightly, seeing the conflict more in sociological than religious or political terms. Gibb argues the conflict was between the Meccan elite and desert nomads, between centralization and tribalism.[92] The tribesmen wanted to appropriate conquered lands for their own use and rejected the appeals to unity and central authority. Although the chronicles highlight religious personalities and grievances, Gibb states, "These only provided a rallying-cry and a cloak for the material grievances of the tribesmen and Medinians."[93] Although it is important to recognize that religio-political formulations within the sources cannot be taken at face value, Gibb's analysis in some ways still presents a reductionist interpretation of the forces involved.

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[92] H.A.R. Gibb, "An Interpretation of Islamic History," in *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, ed. S.J. Shaw and W.R. Polk (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962; reprint, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982). Ella Landau-Tasseron moves away from the notion of tribalism, but still sees the tensions within the community as an almost inevitable side effect of centralization. According to her, "ᶜUthmān was murdered because his conduct as caliph was some years ahead of his time, and aroused opposition from various quarters." Landau-Tasseron, "From Tribal Society to Centralized Polity: An Interpretation of Events and Anecdotes of the Formative Period of Islam," *JSAI* 24 (2000): 199.
[93] Ibid., 7 (page reference is to reprint edition).

Martin Hinds, in contrast, argues for a more complex explanation based on religion, politics, economics, and sociology. He concludes that the primary tension facing the community was between the new elite based on precedence in Islam and the old tribal-based elite of Mecca.[94] ʿUthmān relied increasingly on the old elite, his own tribe of Quraysh, to maintain central authority in the rapidly expanding empire. This was resented by the early Meccan converts who emigrated with Muḥammad to Medina (*muhājirūn*) and the Medinan "helpers" (*anṣār*) who saw their own prestige based on early conversion (*sābiqah*) slipping away. They accused ʿUthmān of reverting to pre-Islamic social values and structures thereby threatening the very basis of the new Islamic community. The tensions came to a head in the provinces when the first wave of conquerors made up of early converts began to be supplanted by the Quraysh who followed and used their greater trading expertise and tribal prestige to assert their own authority.[95] Groups of dissidents from the provinces confronted ʿUthmān in Medina, he repented and promised to change. However, when the besiegers saw no improvement, they broke into ʿUthmān's house and killed him. Hinds' interpretation has become the generally accepted one among western scholars.

Recognizing the need to be skeptical about the sources, but then using that very skepticism to dig deeper in order to find out what really happened, is the objective of Wilferd Madelung. In *The Succession to Muḥammad* Madelung argues that the accounts are tainted by a need to legitimate later political realities.[96] But from the wide ranging and often contradictory accounts, Madelung appears to base his selection on those that fit his own interpretation rather than any objective and consistent criteria.[97] Madelung argues forcibly that the Shīʿite interpretation that Muḥammad designated his nephew and son-in-law, ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, to be his successor is indeed the correct one. Madelung basically accepts all the accounts that portray ʿUthmān as incompetent, irreligious, greedy, and cowardly, while discounting variant accounts as unreliable.[98] Thus Madelung blames the revolt on ʿUthmān personally rather than sociological, religious, or political tensions.

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[94] Martin Hinds, "The Murder of the Caliph ʿUthmān," *IJMES* 3 (1972): 450-469. In this article he is building on the argument he put forward in "Kūfan Political Alignments and Their Background in the Mid-Seventh Century A.D.," *IJMES* (2:1971): 346-367. Also see his "Siffin Arbitration Agreement" *Journal of Semitic Studies* 17 (1972): 92-129.

[95] Mahmood Ibrahim sees a similar division within the community, but believes Hinds did not go far enough in emphasizing the economic and political importance of the Meccans' merchant capital. Ibrahim, *Merchant Capital and Islam* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 150-155.

There are clearly pitfalls within the sources and it is difficult to know where and when to level a more critical gaze. But for the most part, textual criticism of the sources has moved from an effort to determine why ʿUthmān was murdered to how the significance of this event was understood by later generations of Muslims.[99] Closely related to this is growing interest in and appreciation for the ʿAbbāsid chroniclers who were responsible for determining the significance of the revolt for their readers. In many ways it is observations made on the ʿAbbāsid narratives of ʿUthmān that have pushed Western scholars to shift their analyses from compilation to narration and their conclusions from stagnation to dynamism. R.S. Humphreys has done the most to further our understanding of the ways ʿAbbāsid chroniclers selected and arranged their sources in order to convey a particular interpretation of the revolt against ʿUthmān.[100]

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[96] Wilferd Madelung, *The Succession to Muhammad: A Study of the Early Caliphate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[97] For example, he asserts Aḥmad b. Abī Yaʿqūb b. Wadīḥ al-Yaʿqūbī (d. 283/897) is generally not a reliable source for early Islamic history (Ibid., 100, fn., 107), but then Madelung defends a report by him in which ʿĀʾishah is recorded as instigating rebellion against ʿUthmān. Madelung also relies on the regional "schools" approach to early historiography that was discredited by Albrecht Noth in *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition*.

[98] Not too surprisingly he relies primarily on sources recorded in al-Balādhurī, for as will be discussed below, Balādhurī includes more accounts that are critical of ʿUthmān personally. And this despite the fact that in his excursus on the "Crisis of the Caliphate of ʿUthmān," Madelung acknowledges that Balādhurī condensed reports and did not use *isnāds* consistently. Madelung, *The Succession to Muhammad*, 373-378.

[99] Madelung's excursus on ʿUthmān is the last analysis I am aware of attempting to determine which accounts are more reliable and thereby determine what actually happened and why. Ibid. And as mentioned above, his use of regional schools as an aid in this process suggests there are weaknesses in his conclusions.

Humphreys uses the reign of ʿUthmān in al-Balādhurī's *Kitāb ansāb al-ashrāf*, a biographically based history of the early Companions, to illustrate how close analysis of the way al-Balādhurī constructed his narrative from disparate accounts can tell us what he believed to be the key questions arising from the revolt. Thus Humphreys notes that al-Balādhurī begins his section on the election of ʿUthmān with three apparently unrelated accounts, which when taken as a whole set out what al-Balādhurī believed to be the main controversies arising from the *shūrā*. Namely,

> 1) Did the electoral committee named by ʿUmar really possess the right and authority to choose the head of the Muslim community?
> 2) Did the electors carry out their role in a lawful and godly manner, or were they instead governed by faction and selfish ambition?
> 3) Was ʿUthmān in fact the best available candidate, and was he so acknowledged by all the senior Companions?
> 4) In the end, was the election of ʿUthman legally and religiously binding on the entire Community, both at that moment and for all later generations?[101]

Humphreys concludes that despite the use of many accounts that are critical of ʿUthmān, al-Balādhurī always mitigates them with accounts that assert a clearly Sunnī orthodox response to these questions: the *shūrā* was legitimate; ʿUthmān was an equally qualified candidate; all the Companions agreed on ʿUthmān, making it a legally binding election for all generations.

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[100] Humphreys, "Qur'anic Myth" and *Islamic History: A Framework for Inquiry*, revised edition (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 98-103.
[101] Humphreys, *Islamic History*, 101.

In his highly significant article, "Qurʾanic Myth and Narrative Structure in Early Islamic Historiography," Humphreys compares the portrayal of ʿUthmān in al-Ṭabarī and two pro-ʿAlid writers, al-Masʿūdī and al-Yaʿqūbī. Recall that in this article Humphreys is arguing that the dialectic between scripture and historical experience crystallized around the myth of Covenant, Betrayal, and Redemption. He states,

> For those who contemplated the Islamic past, it was crucial to determine both the circumstances in which the betrayal of the Muḥammadan covenant had occurred and the nature of that betrayal.... In particular the debate centered on whether the ultimate guilt for the catastrophe lay with ʿUthmān himself, with the rebels who had put him to death, or with other elements in the community.[102]

From his comparative analysis, Humphreys concludes al-Masʿūdī held ʿUthmān personally responsible for all that happened while al-Yaʿqūbī portrayed ʿUthmān's corruption as merely the symptom of moral rot that had set into the community when it rejected ʿAlī's rightful claim to the caliphate. Humphreys contrasts these two pro-ʿAlid or proto-Shīʿite interpretations, with al-Ṭabarī's narrative.

Al-Ṭabarī gives two distinct and in fact contradictory versions of the revolt against ʿUthmān. The first, based on Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Wāqidī (d. 207/823), is critical of ʿUthmān and the Companions. This narrative is more fully developed and is joined by collaborating and qualifying accounts by Muḥammad Ibn Isḥāq (d. 150/767) and others. The second is a single, smooth narrative based entirely on Sayf

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[102] Humphreys, "Qurʾanic Myth," 278.

b. ᶜUmar (d. ca. 180/796). Al-Ṭabarī is unique among his contemporaries in his use of Sayf and he relies heavily upon him for the whole period from the Riddah Wars to the Battle of Ṣiffīn (11-36/632-657).[103] Sayf portrays ᶜUthmān as an ideal Muslim leader, the community as united, and the Companions as pious; the problems stemmed from the spread of a heresy led by ᶜAbdallāh ibn Sabāʾ, and the machinations of disgruntled individuals. Sayf's accounts are full of popular piety so that the protagonists "emerge as larger-than-life heroes of the faith... Such heroes, sanctified the very events in which they were involved, removing these events from the gritty realm of profane strife and bloodshed, transforming them into sacred history."[104] Before discussing more fully what conclusions can be drawn from al-Ṭabarī's juxtaposition of sacred and critical treatments of the revolt against ᶜUthmān, it is necessary to be more familiar with al-Wāqidī and Sayf, for they form the basis of the ᶜUthmān narrative in al-Ṭabarī and many of his successors.

ᶜUmar al-Wāqidī was born 130/747 in Medina and died in Baghdad in 207/823. He is credited with many books, the most famous of which are *Kitāb al-maghāzī* and his books on the Conquests (*futūḥ*). Although al-Wāqidī's *Kitab al-maghāzī* is extant, his writings on ᶜUthmān, the *fitnah*, and related topics only survive in works of later authors. Muḥammad ibn Saᶜd (d.230/845), al-Balādhurī, and al-Ṭabarī are the most significant because they give full *isnāds* for their accounts.[105] It is through these authors that al-Wāqidī's narrative entered into the historical discourse on ʿUthmān. Al-Wāqidī's accounts are quite critical of ʿUthmān and he has been accused of having pro-ʿAlid tendencies or of being a moderate Shīʿite. According to Ibn al-Nadīm it was al-Wāqidī who related that ʿAlī was one of the miracles of the Prophet.[106] Nevertheless, this charge of Shīʿism is not authenticated by Shīʿite *rijāl* books. Rather than a Shīʿite, al-Wāqidī's pro-ʿAlid views should be seen in light of the fluid religio-political positions that characterized the early ʿAbbāsid period.[107]

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[103] R.S. Humphreys (trans.), *The History of al-Ṭabarī Vol. XV Crisis of the Early Caliphate* (New York: SUNY Press, 1990), xvi.

[104] Ibid., xvii.

[105] It is clear that al-Wāqidī was also a major source for the later pro-ᶜAlid writers: al-Yaᶜqūbī, al-Masᶜūdī, and Ibn Aᶜtham who do not name their sources.

Al-Wāqidī may have had pro-ʿAlid sympathies, but he remained faithful to the ʿAbbāsid house and thus also to what would become the Sunnī position on the caliphate.[108] For example, al-Wāqidī's criticisms of ʿUthmān appear to stem not from a desire to vilify ʿUthmān, but from a more skeptical view of the early period and Companions in general.[109] He does include some positive reports about ʿUthmān and during the *shūrā* the focus is on the clear divisions and disagreements among the *shūrā* members rather than ʿUthmān's shortcomings. Similarly, although Wāqidī is a source for material that praises ʿAlī and he clearly had ʿAlid sympathies, he does not idealize ʿAlī to the degree found in Shīʿite writers a century later. It is important to remember historical context; in the third/ninth century the ʿAbbāsids were trying to both retain the support of the ʿAlids who had helped bring them to power, but also to distance themselves from the ʿAlids since the ʿAbbāsids were not themselves descendents of ʿAlī.[110]

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[106] He also attributes to al-Wāqidī the book *Kitāb al-riddah wa'l-dār*. He apparently also wrote a monograph entitled *Mawlid al-Ḥasan wa'l-Ḥusayn* which certainly suggests Shīʿite leanings. Al-Wāqidī also collected a great deal of evidence of Muḥammad's having died in ʿAlī's bosom. Stefan Leder, "Al-Waḳidī, Muḥammad b. ʿUmar," *EI²*.

[107] Humphreys' analysis of al-Balādhurī mentioned above also shows the limitations of trying to find a strict bifurcation in the second/eighth and third/ninth centuries between Sunnī and Shīʿite views.

[108] Al-Wāqidī enjoyed the favor of the ʿAbbāsids and therefore may have tried to portray their family, ʿAbbās in particular, in a favorable way. Leder, "Al-Waḳidī."

[109] Khalidi believes al-Wāqidī was the first Islamic historian, using more critical methods rather than following the forms of sacred history. Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought*, 47-48.

In contrast to al-Wāqidī, Sayf b. ʿUmar presents an extremely positive picture of ʿUthmān and the Companions. His *Kitāb al-riddah wa'l-futūḥ* was long thought to be no longer extant in the original. Scholars relied traditionally on redactions of Sayf primarily in al-Ṭabarī. However, the discovery of manuscript fragments in the University Library of Imām Muḥammad Ibn Saʿud Islamic University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia has changed all that. Qasim al-Samarrai has published an edited edition that contains the *Kitāb al-riddah wa'l-futūḥ* as well as Sayf's *Kitāb al-jamal wa masīr ʿĀ'ishah wa ʿAlī.*[111] It was assumed for an equally long period that Ṭabarī, who relies heavily on the *Kitāb al-riddah wa'l-futūḥ* for his section on ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān, transmitted long sections from Sayf, with minimal editing that gave a faithful presentation of Sayf's original work. However, thanks to Samarrai's edition it now seems clear that although al-Ṭabarī gives a broad cross-section of Sayf's work, he also omitted and abridged many *akhbār.*[112] Nevertheless, Sayf and the redaction of him in al-Ṭabarī present an idealized image of the early community that appears highly suspect in comparison with other sources. Why did al-Ṭabarī choose to rely so heavily on Sayf when none of his contemporaries used Sayf at all?

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[110] Discussed further in Chapter One.

[111] Sayf b. ʿUmar, *Kitāb al-riddah wa-l-futūḥ* and *Kitāb al-jamal wa masīr ʿĀ'isha wa ʿAlī*, ed. Qasim al-Samarrai (Leiden: Smitskamp Oriental Antiquarium, 1995).

[112] R.S. Humphreys, "The Odd Couple: al-Ṭabarī and Sayf b. ʿUmar," in *History and Historiography in Early Islamic Times*, ed. Lawrence I. Conrad (Forthcoming). Based on Samarrai's analysis of the manuscript, Humphreys adds, "Out of 304 *akhbār* in the Riyadh ms., al-Ṭabarī seems to omit 122 completely, and to abridge 36 others. He also rearranged many texts to fit his chronological schema or for other purposes." Ibid. Relying also on Samarraia's edition of Sayf, Marianne Engle Cameron has recently compared the Sayf accounts in al-Ṭabarī and Ibn ʿAsākir and concluded that Ibn ʿAsākir is more faithful to the original. She notes that al-Ṭabarī often cut poetry entirely, combined different *akhbār* with different *isnāds*, "and suppressed personal and place names that he found problematic." "Sayf at First," 72. She also points out however, "Al-Ṭabarī and Ibn ʿAsākir's versions of Sayf are virtually identical in many instances." Ibid., 74. In my own comparison of Samarrai's Sayf and al-Ṭabarī's treatment of the revolt against ʿUthmān, I discovered that what al-Ṭabarī most consistently deleted from Sayf accounts were references to Israel and what appears to have been an effort on Sayf's part to give a more overtly religious tone to events and to draw parallels with the larger, pre-Islamic,

Hodgson, who first noted al-Ṭabarī's juxtaposition of Sayf and al-Wāqidī, concluded that al-Ṭabarī did not buy into Sayf's idealized portrayal, but rather used him to highlight the more realistic accounts found in al-Wāqidī and others.[113] Al-Ṭabarī appears to give Sayf's account pride of place as he inserts his narrative of the revolt right at the point of climax in al-Wāqidī's narrative. But al-Ṭabarī actually begins and ends the revolt narrative with accounts by al-Wāqidī that are outside the chronology of events and show "that the fault lay in basic problems of power, which evoked honest differences of opinion; and they even hint at something of al-Ṭabarī's own solution."[114] This, Hodgson states, was the reliance on law to limit absolute authority. According to Hodgson, al-Ṭabarī believed "if the concerned Muslims could establish a law that all would acknowledge, it would become less important who was ruler, for the area within which he could act arbitrarily would be reduced as to be socially unimportant."[115] Hodgson points out that this indeed became the apologia for the subsequent Sunnī position on the nature of the Muslim community, in part thanks to al-Ṭabarī's efforts as an historian and jurist.

Humphreys at first followed Hodgson's interpretation, believing that al-Ṭabarī used Sayf's "Sunday-school" version as an out for those who wanted one from the

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prophetic tradition. This trend in the early literature is also mentioned in Suleiman A. Mourad, "On Early Islamic Historiography: Abū Ismāʿīl al-Azdī and his *Futūḥ al-Shām*," *JAOS* 120:4 (2000): 579.

[113] This has been the majority opinion for some time.

[114] Hodgson, "Two Pre-Modern Muslim Historians," 57.

[115] Ibid., 55.

controversies of the early Islamic period, but also to highlight the fact that it was indeed a failure to face those controversies.[116] More recently, however, Humphreys has changed his opinion, concluding that al-Ṭabarī may have thought Sayf's version to be accurate or at least as likely as any other.[117] Ella Landau-Tasseron was the first to point out that in the medieval sources there is no unique opprobrium against Sayf.[118] Humphreys concurs, arguing that rather than doubting the reliability of Sayf's accounts, al-Ṭabarī actually sought them out as a source for details not recorded elsewhere.[119] Humphreys is quick to add, however, "Al-Ṭabarī was of course not naïve about the character of Sayf's presentation; the very fact that he includes contradictory reports by al-Wāqidī and others demonstrates that he knew a degree of skepticism was in order." But whereas Humphreys once thought the point of this juxtaposition was to cast doubt on Sayf's version, he now thinks, "It is perfectly possible that al-Ṭabarī uses Sayf to cast doubt on the 'conventional interpretation' of al-Wāqidī."[120] Hodgson and Humphreys both believe al-Ṭabarī juxtaposes the accounts of Sayf and al-Wāqidī in order to present his own interpretation of the causes and consequences of the revolt against ʿUthmān.

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[116] See Humphreys, "Qurʾanic Myth" and the introduction to his translation of al-Ṭabarī's treatment of the reign of ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān.
[117] Humphreys, "The Odd Couple."
[118] She argues that skepticism about Sayf's reliability is more a product of contemporary scholarship and biases than one reflected in the early sources. Instead she points out that any criticisms of Sayf in the medieval sources were from *muḥaddithūn* who were defending their area of expertise and working to elevate *ḥadīth* studies over history and thus were equally critical of al-Waqidī and other early historians who did not follow the rigorous use of *isnāds* employed by later writers. Ella Landau-Tasseron, "Sayf Ibn ʿUmar in Medieval and Modern Scholarship," *Der Islam* 67 (1990): 1-26. Humphreys agrees that "however faulty Sayf's isnāds may have been, al-Ṭabarī could probably regard them as equal or superior to those of Ibn Isḥāq (d. 151/767), Abū Mikhnaf, and many others." "The Odd Couple."
[119] Humphreys, "The Odd Couple."
[120] Ibid.

Unlike Hodgson, Humphreys does not put forward what he thinks al-Ṭabarī believed to be the means of redemption for the community. In fact Humphreys is no longer sure that al-Ṭabarī believed redemption was possible.[121] Al-Ṭabarī's pessimism may have marked the turning away from the dynamism and hope of the third/ninth century. Humphreys observes that after the humiliation of the ʿAbbāsid Caliphate in the fourth/tenth century no one ever tried to redo al-Ṭabarī's *summa* of early Islamic history. Rather, "after him, historians increasingly focused on recent and contemporary events, interpreting them in a decisively non-Qurʾanic framework. For such historians, the beginnings of Islam could be mourned and longed for, but few any longer believed that they could be recovered and done anew."[122] Considering, however, the range of interpretations possible within al-Ṭabarī's own narrative, the input of extra-Qurʾanic frameworks, and the gulf between recovering the past and abandoning it, there is still plenty of room for later historians to negotiate the space between religious ideals and political necessities.

For example, Fred Donner points to the limitations posed by the Qurʾān's binary portrayal of human nature, but then goes on to assert that ʿUthmān was therefore a problematic figure from the very beginning.[123] Since, according to the Qur'ān individuals were either good or bad, and since the Companions of the Prophet had to be good, ʿUthmān posed a dilemma. "The only solution to this dilemma was to find a way to portray ʿUthmān as having undergone a character change – a transformation, however, almost unique in Muslim annals, in which individuals are generally marked with indelible character traits, and in which turning from light to darkness is virtually unthinkable."[124] How to account for this? Did God not know what was going to happen when He allowed ʿUthmān to be elected caliph? That historians felt the weight of this question, is supported by the fact that they record ʿUthmān asking his accusers this very same question. Donner believes historians responded by developing a story of ʿUthmān losing the Prophet's ring in a well, thereby symbolizing his loss of divine favor and caliphal authority.[125] Such efforts at negotiation and compromise, however, are readily attributed to ʿAbbāsid writers while later historians supposedly just indiscriminately repeated them.

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[121] In "Qurʾanic Myth" Humphreys presented al-Ṭabarī as optimistic and the apogee of historiographic dynamism based on the Qurʾanic myth of Covenant, Betrayal, and Redemption. Although he still finds this a helpful framework for analyzing third/ninth century Islamic historiography, he now emphasizes the pessimism in al-Ṭabarī's history, a pessimism Humphreys attributes to al-Ṭabarī's understanding of Time and belief that the Final Judgment was drawing near. See "Divine and Human Meanings of Time in Early Islamic Historiography: The Case of Abu Jaʿfar al-Tabari," in *Proceedings: reports, abstracts and round table introductions, 19th International Congress of Historical Sciences held in Oslo 6-13 August, 2000* (Oslo: University of Oslo, 2000), 66; and "Turning Points in Islamic Historical Practice," in *Turning Points in Historiography: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*, ed. Q. Edward Wang and Georg G. Iggers, Rochester Studies in Historiography (Rochester, NY: The University of Rochester Press, 2002), 99, fn. 2.

[122] Humphreys, "Qurʾanic Myth," 281-2.

Even Tarif Khalidi, who has done so much to show ongoing dynamism in medieval Islamic historiography, asserts that when it came to the core conflicts embodied in the revolt against ʿUthmān dialogue was impossible. He states,

> From the time of Tabari at least, if not before, the Sunni historiographic tradition drew a blanket of exoneration over the whole sorry affair [of ʿUthmān]. It was decided, often against weighty evidence, that no Companion of the Prophet directly or indirectly involved in the murder and its terrible consequences could be judged guilty of sinful behavior. Even Shiʿi historians like Yaʿqubi or Masʿudi had to express their anti-ʿUthmanic sentiments with a

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[123] Donner, *Narratives of Islamic Origins*, 190-195.
[124] Ibid., 193.
[125] Ibid.

> great deal of circumspection. To take obvious sides in this divisive episode would be to put at risk the very fabric of the social order. Conspiratorial explanations were acceptable, provided they were related to shadowy figures like ʿAbdullah ibn Saba' who was accused of plotting to undermine the unity of the community. But once the unity of the community was accepted as the highest politico-juristic value and took shape in the theory of consensus it was not possible for historians to pass explicit moral judgment on the murder or the caliph without also threatening the basis of that consensus.[126]

Having asserted once again the idea of a static historical narrative for the early Islamic period, Khalidi goes on to show how Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1405-6) produced an original interpretation of the revolt. Khalidi, however, sees this as evidence of Ibn Khaldūn's genius rather than the product of ongoing interaction between past and present.

My own research bridges the gap between al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Khaldūn. It shows these two were not unique in their desire to create narratives that reflected current concerns and conveyed their own responses to those concerns. I am joined in this effort by a recent collection of articles on Ibn ʿAsākir, which adds to the small, but growing literature on early Islamic historiography in post-Ṭabarī sources.[127] Fred Donner's article on Ibn ʿAsākir's treatment of ʿUthmān is of particular interest.[128]

Donner analyzes the "*strategies of compilation*" Ibn ʿAsākir "employs in presenting individual accounts -- in particular strategies of *selection,* of *placement,* of

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[126] Khalidi, *Historical Thought,* 226.
[127] James Lindsay, ed., *Ibn ʿAsākir and Early Islamic History* (Princeton: The Darwin Press, Inc., 2001).
[128] Fred Donner, "ʿUthmān and the Rāshidūn Caliphs in Ibn ʿAsākir's *Ta'rīkh madīnat Dimashq*: A Study in Strategies of Compilation," in *Ibn ʿAsākir and Early Islamic History*, 44-61.

repetition, and of *manipulation.*"[129] Donner notes that Ibn ʿAsākir relied heavily on *ḥadīth*, chose accounts that portrayed ʿUthmān positively, made only one mention of charges against ʿUthmān, and did so in a way to minimize its impact.[130] Although the very conservatism of Ibn ʿAsākir's narrative might appear to confirm earlier suspicions of historiographic stagnation, it does show ongoing manipulation of earlier sources in order to create new narratives. Donner admits he was aware Ibn ʿAsākir was a part of a program of Sunnī reaction against Shīʿism, but that he nevertheless was "startled by how clearly Ibn ʿAsākir's confessional precommitments show through in the text."[131] Donner argues that a study of strategies of compilation "can lead us to a better understanding of his [Ibn ʿAsākir's] religious and political agenda,"[132] and should therefore, "be at the top of our agenda" when examining similar compilations.[133]

Donner's call for greater attention to the relationship between author, text, and context reflects recent historiographic developments. At first historiographic studies focused almost exclusively on historical context in order to find the meaning of a particular text. This was replaced by a solitary focus on the language of the text itself. It was believed that meaning was found in the content and form of the narrative. The context is in the text. But greater appreciation of the text and the strategies of compilation employed in its construction, also encourages a renewed interest in historical context and the triune relationship between text, author, and context. Tayeb El-Hibri notes,

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[129] Ibid., 47. He notes the last refers "to cases in which the compiler alters a received text by adding something, deleting something, or otherwise changing the wording of the 'original' account in some way" and could also be called a "strategy of redaction." Ibid.
[130] Ibid., 51-59.
[131] Ibid., 60.
[132] Ibid., 47.
[133] Ibid., 61.

> We are only now beginning to see that medieval narrators were far from being mere chroniclers of events and tales. It is now the task of a new generation of specialists to carry forward with a methodology that cuts across paradigms of both linguistic and historical analysis in the effort to reconstruct the thought-world of medieval writers and to give their literary achievements its due appreciation at the same time.[134]

Increasingly historiographic studies are exploring how a combination of literary and historical analysis can reveal more about both.

By tracing the narrative of ʿUthmān through time and space, my comparative textual analysis "cuts across paradigms of both linguistic and historical analysis." My starting place is the narratives, and a comparison of the strategies of compilation used by different authors in different periods. By showing the ongoing process of narrating ʿUthmān, we can better appreciate historians' humanity and individualism as they sought to make meaning of the past. At the same time the evidence of diversity and inter-textual debate propels the analysis outward towards historical context and the ways in which meaning is produced in the intersection between the past and the present.

Conclusion

Perceptions of early Islamic history were central to how the community understood its own identity and legitimated itself against religious, political, and military rivals. To assert, therefore, that the very weight of past ideals stifled the ability to continually interact with them in a way that sought to make meaning of the present is to suggest that medieval writers and thinkers no longer took seriously their identity and purpose to establish God's community on earth, based on unity and justice. This is not to deny that the themes of debate had been largely set by the third/ninth century writers who first wrestled with the questions. Nor does it deny that the legitimacy found in past traditions and authorities meant that later writers relied upon earlier sources. Nevertheless, this study insists that medieval Muslim scholars took seriously the challenges of the early Islamic ideals and continued to wrestle with ways to apply them in their contemporary circumstances. They were able to use the apparently rigid *isnād-khabar* format to increase their own "cultural capital," selectively transmitting past authorities in order to respond to the needs of the present.[135] Moreover, I believe this is supported by the fact that in a time of exceptional crisis in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries we see a re-invigorated use of early Islamic sources and a rejuvenated debate on the foundational religio-political principles first articulated in the third/ninth century.

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[134] Tayeb El-Hibri, review of *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition: A Source-Critical Study*, by Albrecht Noth and Lawrence Conrad, In *JAOS* 118:1 (1998): 118.

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[135] See Michael Chamberlain's extended treatment of the *ʿulamā*'s ability to wield what he calls "cultural capital" in *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190-1350* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

> They did not realize that the facts do not speak for themselves, but that the historian speaks for them, speaks on their behalf, and fashions the fragments of the past into a whole whose integrity is – in its *re*presentation – a purely discursive one.[1]

CHAPTER ONE – REPRESENTATION:

ʿUTHMĀN in the THIRD/NINTH CENTURY SYNTHESES

Introduction

The third/ninth and early fourth/tenth centuries were the formative period of Islamic historiography. During this period the first *ḥadīth* collections, biographical dictionaries, and universal chronicles were produced. In order to see more clearly the points of detail and debate in the narratives of ʿUthmān found in these texts, it is important to consider some of the historical events and debates within which authors constructed their representations of ʿUthmān and the first *fitnah*.

I consider in this chapter three historical events, three issues that arose from them, and how these are debated in three narratives of the revolt against ʿUthmān. The events are the ʿAbbāsid Revolution (129132/747-750), the *miḥnah*, or inquisition (217-237/832-851/2), and the growing power and influence of Turkish military commanders. The ʿAbbāsids had to defend their authority over and against their ʿAlid rivals, their *ʿulamāʾ* critics, and their Turkish slave soldiers. The questions raised by these events regarding who had the right to command obedience, on what basis, and under what circumstances shaped how similar issues were presented in the narratives of the revolt against ʿUthmān.

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[1] White, *Tropics of Discourse*, 125.

We can see the successive layering of these issues by closely comparing the narratives of ʿUthmān found in Ibn Saʿd's *Ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, al-Balādhurī's *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, and al-Ṭabarī's *Ta'rīkh al-rusul wa'l-mulūk*. Ibn Saʿd limits his narrative to defending ʿUthmān and his caliphate through minimizing ʿUthmān's vices and ʿAlī's virtues. In contrast, al-Balādhurī emphasizes ʿAlī's virtues and ʿUthmān's vices, but he defends ʿUthmān's caliphate on the principle of obedience. Al-Balādhurī moves beyond proto-Sunnī and pro-ʿAlid polemics to focus on the political authority of the caliph, regardless of his behavior, and the obligation upon religious leaders to advise and support the caliph. While al-Balādhurī puts forward compromise positions between ʿAlids and proto-Sunnīs, between political and religious authority, al-Ṭabarī presents two competing, and often incompatible, appeals to the principles of justice and obedience. He leaves it up to the reader to decide which is more essential for maintaining the unity of the community.[2] He does this by juxtaposing two contradictory reports of ʿUthmān's caliphate. This chapter focuses on how these authors selected, edited, arranged, and framed their sources in order to convey differing opinions on religio-political topics of contemporary concern.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

One of the most significant issues of the day was how to perceive the ʿAbbāsids themselves. As Stephen Humphreys has stated on several occasions:

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[2] Humphreys has described al-Ṭabarī's approach as follows: "To a far greater extent than other historians of his time, Ṭabarī allows – and even requires – his readers to frame their own conclusions about the true meaning of the events he recounts. There is here a studied ambiguity, a determination to show that the religious and political problems posed by ʿUthmān's reign might be resolved in a number of different ways." Humphreys, "Qur'anic Myth," 279.

> Since 132/750 [the ʿAbbāsid Revolution] the crucial issue for every historian had been the stance he ought to take toward the ʿAbbāsids. Should they be presented as usurpers of ʿAlid (or even Umayyad) rights, as legitimate successors to an unbroken caliphal succession stretching back to Abū Bakr, or as the restorers of the purity of Muḥammad's *umma*? On one's resolution of this problem rested his interpretation of Islamic history for the century and a half before the ʿAbbāsid Revolution.[3]

Interpretations of the Revolution were directly related to interpretations of early Islamic history, and this is one of the reasons why the ʿAbbāsid Revolution is one of the most complex and highly studied events in Islamic history.[4] For our purposes, the main issue is that the ʿAbbāsids' role in the agitation against the Umayyads was clandestine and relied on the ideology and activities of pro-ʿAlids. When the ʿAbbāsids seized power they had to co-opt the ʿAlid argument that the caliph should come from the "house of the Prophet" to include the descendents of Muḥammad's uncle, ʿAbbās, and not just the descendents of ʿAlī. Consequently, the ʿAbbāsids' legitimacy was always vulnerable to the purer claims of the ʿAlids. The ʿAlid narrative of early Islamic history was, and continued to be, the most readily available platform for channeling social discontent into political action. Once the ʿAbbāsids had used ʿAlid claims for their own success against the Umayyads, they then had to defuse them so that the same arguments could not be used against them.[5] Thus a strongly pro-ʿAlid sentiment was followed by a more critical one.[6] Although such shifts in interpreting the past were shaped by the needs of the ʿAbbāsid caliphs, their actual formation and articulation was in the hands of the *ʿulamāʾ*.

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[3] Humphreys, "Ta'rīkh," *EI²*. El-Hibri also considers the layers of interpretation in the chronicles due to the parallels between the first *fitnah* and the civil war between al-Amīn and al-Ma'mūn (809-813). He states, "The analogy between the internal strife in both ages inspired narrators to draw a correlation between the actors, situations, and contested ideas in the two eras." El-Hibri, *Reinterpreting*, 105.

[4] Elton Daniel, *The Political and Social History of Khurasan under Abbasid Rule, 747-820* (Chicago: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1979); Hugh Kennedy, *The Early ʿAbbasid Caliphate: A Political History* (London: Croom Helm, 1981); Jacob Lassner, *Islamic Revolution and Historical Memory*; Jacob Lassner, *The Shaping of ʿAbbāsid Rule* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980); M.A. Shaban, *The ʿAbbāsid Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); Julius Wellhausen, *The Arab Kingdom and Its Fall.*

The caliphs needed the *ʿulamāʾ* to bolster their legitimacy while the *ʿulamāʾ* looked to the caliphs as patrons, enforcers of *sharīʿah*, defenders of the Islamic community, and symbols of continuity. The desire for continuity and order encouraged an acceptance of the ʿAbbāsids as well as the order of the first four caliphs. In the third/ninth century we see the growing strength of what would become the Sunnī consensus position on early Islamic history and Muḥammad's Companions. Namely, all the Companions were praiseworthy and the first four caliphs were all rightly guided and ruled in the order of their virtue. The first step in this process was to deny that ʿAlī had sole claim to the caliphate.[7] The belief that he did was increasingly marginalized and attributed to the *Rawāfiḍ*.[8] Even as the majority of Muslims accepted the precedence of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar, ambiguities lingered regarding the respective merits of ʿAlī and ʿUthmān. The growing consensus and lingering ambiguities of the proto-Sunnī position is reflected in the writings of al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/868-9) and Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855).

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[5] "The Caliph al-Rashīd (d. 193/809) remained worried about ʿAlid sympathies and imprisoned or assassinated several members of the ʿAlid family," including the seventh Shīʿite imām, Mūsā b. Jaʿfar al-Kāẓim. Abou El Fadl, *Rebellion & Violence*, 84.

[6] Jacob Lassner has looked at this process in depth in *Islamic Revolution*.

[7] The main way to do this was to reject the Tradition that describes Muḥammad designating ʿAlī as his successor at Ghadir Khumm. Second, was to argue that Muḥammad's choice of Abū Bakr to lead the Friday prayers signified his appointment as the next leader of the community. See Asma Asfaruddin, "In Praise of the Caliphs: Re-Creating History from the *Manāqib* Literature," *IJMES* 31 (1999): 329-350.

[8] Even as this became a part of majority consensus, it forced those who wanted to stand by ʿAlī's special claim to the caliphate appear more extreme and sectarian. Thus the pro-ʿAlids during the ninth century also developed the historical interpretations and theology that came to be known as Shīʿite Islam. In the medieval Arabic sources this group is often referred to as the *Rawāfiḍ*; the designation comes from the Arabic *rafaḍa*, to reject, i.e. to reject the legitimacy of the first three caliphs in favor of ʿAlī. Someone who does this is a *Rāfiḍī*, pl., *Rawāfiḍ*, or a member of the collective *Rāfiḍah*. It signifies separation from the majority opinion and taking the veneration of ʿAlī and his family to extremes. Asfaruddin, "In Praise."

Despite being philosophical, methodological, theological, and political opponents, Abū ʿUthmān ʿAmr b. Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal refuted the ʿAlids by asserting Abū Bakr and ʿUmar's rights to the caliphate while showing a certain ambivalence regarding ʿUthmān. Among al-Jāḥiẓ's many works is *Kitāb al-ʿUthmāniyyah.* Contrary to what the title would lead one to believe, "In the *ʿUthmāniyya*, ʿUthmān is not defended nor are the Traditions (*ḥadīth*) in support of his virtue referred to. Rather, the book deals with the legitimacy of the caliphate of Abū Bakr based upon his virtues."[9] Thus the term "ʿUthmānīyyah" most likely corresponds to what we now refer to by the term Sunnī Islam.[10]

During this period the Sunnī position was still under formation and there appear to have been lingering debates on the order of ʿUthmān and ʿAlī. For example, in his *Kitāb al-sunnah,* Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal places the Companions in order of merit (*tafḍīl*), with Abū Bakr first, then ʿUmar, "then the six *aṣḥāb al-shūrā* appointed by ʿUmar all of whom were worthy of the caliphate and merit the title of imām: ʿUthmān, ʿAlī, al-Zubayr, Ṭalḥah, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAwf, and Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ; then the fighters at Badr, the *muhādjirs* and the *anṣār*."[11] This is different from what would become the Sunnī consensus that elevated the first four caliphs, in order, and then the other Companions. But Ibn Ḥanbal also "is credited with being one of the earliest theologians to formulate the position that the 'orthodox' order of the *Rāshidūn* Caliphs was a reflection of their merits relative to one another."[12] It was necessary to defend the order of the first four caliphs in order to defend the virtue of the Companions and the unity of the early community. This process is evidenced in *ḥadīth* that emphasize ʿUthmān's personal piety, link him with Abū Bakr and ʿUmar, and attempt to explain the first *fitnah*.

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[9] Alison Howard Mathias Zahniser, "The ʿUthmāniyya of al-Jāḥiẓ: An Analysis of Content, Method and Sources" (Ph.D. diss., The Johns Hopkins University, 1973), 5. According to al-Jāḥiẓ, he was commissioned by the Caliph al-Ma'mūn to write a series of books describing the views of various sects on the subject of the caliphate and it is likely that the *ʿUthmāniyyah* was among these books. Zahniser states, "Although Jāḥiẓ claims to be merely reflecting the views of the ʿUthmānīyyah in this treatise, one gets the impression that he himself supports their views at least in so far as they relate to the superiority of Abū Bakr and thus his right to be the Prophet's successor." Ibid., 5.

[10] Ibid., 4-5; Muḥammad Qasim Zaman, *Religion and Politics under the Early ʿAbbasids: The Emergence of the Proto-Sunnī Elite* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1997), 56. But Asfaruddin disagrees.

Muslim (d. 261/875) and al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870) produced the two most authoritative collections of Prophetic *ḥadīth*, each entitled *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*. In his section on ʿUthmān, Muslim organizes twelve *ḥadīth* around three thematic groups or "*matn* clusters" that defend ʿUthmān's piety, the order of the first caliphs, and the first *fitnah*.[13] The first describes Muḥammad reclining in his rooms and although he did not adjust or close his robes for Abū Bakr or ʿUmar, he did so when ʿUthmān entered. After they left, ʿĀʾishah asked him why and Muḥammad responded: "Should I not show modesty [respect] to one whom even the angels show modesty."[14] The second clustered theme focuses on Muḥammad's prediction of the *fitnah* against ʿUthmān. The context is the first three caliphs each seeking an audience with Muḥammad.

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[11] Henri Laoust, "Ibn Ḥanbal," *EI*^{2}.

[12] Asfaruddin, "In Praise," 341.

[13] See G.H.A. Juynboll, "Muslim b. al-Ḥadjdjādj" *EI*^{2} on the "*matn* cluster."

[14] *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim: Being Traditions of the sayings and doings of the Prophet Muḥammad as narrated by his companions and compiled under the title al-Jamiʿ-us-Ṣaḥīḥ by Imām Muslim* rendered into English by Abdul Ḥamīd Siddīqī (Beirut: Dār al-Arabia, 1971), vol. 4: 1281-2.

Each knocked at his door and Muḥammad told the servant to let him in and give him the "glad tidings of Paradise." When ʿUthmān knocked, however, Muḥammad told the servant: "open (the door) and give him the glad tidings of Paradise after a trial would afflict him."[15] The third and final cluster is closely related to the preceding one, but the setting is now a well rather than Muḥammad's room. Again Muḥammad told the servant to "admit him [ʿUthmān] and give him glad tidings (and inform) him of the turmoil which he shall have to face."[16] All of these are commonly referred to in subsequent narratives of ʿUthmān in biographical dictionaries and chronicles.[17] These *ḥadīths* reflect a growing consensus on ʿUthmān's piety as well as the order of the first four caliphs. But defending ʿUthmān's personal piety and right to the caliphate is not the same as defending his actions during his caliphate. To evaluate ʿUthmān's rule was to consider the foundations and limitations of caliphal authority.

The relationship between the *ʿulamāʾ* and the ʿAbbāsid caliphs and the separation of religious and political authority has received almost as much attention as the ʿAbbāsid Revolution. The *miḥnah* is often seen as the turning point when the caliph settled for political authority, while religious authority was in the hands of those who studied sacred Traditions and used them to develop Islamic law.[18] In an apparent attempt to limit the growing authority of the Traditionists, the Caliph al-Maʾmūn instituted the *miḥnah* in 217/832 in which scholars had to agree to the Muʿtazilite doctrine of a created Qurʾān or face persecution.[19] The *miḥnah* was continued by his successors: al-Muʿtaṣim (218-227/833-842), al-Wāthiq (227-232/ 842-847), and al-Mutawakkil (232-247 / 847-861). The latter abandoned the *miḥnah* in 237/851-2[20] and tried to reconcile the caliphate with popular opinion in Baghdad and the Traditionists.[21] Consequently, the caliphs were forced to defer to the religious and legal scholars on matters of religion and Islamic law. But when the *miḥnah* exposed the ʿAbbāsid caliphs as very far removed from the increasingly idealized Companions, why did the *ʿulamāʾ* continue to support their claims to absolute political authority? The long accepted conclusion has been that the *ʿulamāʾ* chose to tolerate tyranny as preferable to anarchy.[22] A more nuanced argument, however, is put forward by the research of Khaled Abou El Fadl and Michael Cook.

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[15] Ibid., 1282. ʿUthmān's piety is further emphasized with his response to this foreboding news: "O Allah, grant me steadfastness. Allah is one Whose help is to be sought." Ibid.

[16] Ibid., 1283.

[17] Another is ʿUthmān enlarging the mosque in Medina. Muslim portrays it positively; Muḥammad said who does this was not only promised paradise, but will have a house in paradise like the mosque. *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 1, 378.

[18] Scholars have debated the motivation and significance of the *miḥnah*. Patricia Crone and Martin Hinds present the failure of the *miḥnah* as marking the permanent divorce between religious and political authority. *God's Caliph: Religious Authority in the First Centuries of Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). El-Hibri views the *miḥnah* as an effort on the part of al-Ma'mūn to strengthen his legitimacy as a religious leader since he was politically compromised due to the civil

Abou El Fadl and Cook point to the efforts of Muslim scholars and jurists to balance the principles of obedience and justice, both of which are endorsed in the Qurʾān and *ḥadīths*. The Qurʾān speaks of the importance of obeying those in

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war with his brother. El-Hibri, *Reinterpreting*, 101-108. In contrast, John Turner argues the *miḥnah* was consistent with earlier caliphal efforts to define orthodoxy and heresy in, "Inquisition and the Definition of Identity in early Abbasid History" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Michigan, 2001). M. Qasim Zaman sees it as an aberration in an otherwise cooperative relationship between caliphs and *ʿulamāʾ*. *Religion and Politics*. See also Christopher Melchert, review of *Religion and Politics*, by M. Qasim Zaman, In *Islamic Law & Society* 6:2 (1999):272-275; and Asfaruddin, "In Praise."

[19] The *miḥnah* came to live in infamy in part because of the persecution of Ibn Ḥanbal. He refused to accept the createdness of the Qurʾān and was arrested by al-Maʾmūn and imprisoned in Baghdad. Cooperson and Turner see this significance as being imposed on the *miḥnah* by later Ḥanbalīs.

[20] That same year he invited Ibn Ḥanbal to his court in Samarra. ʿAlī was cursed from the pulpits and the tombs of his descendents were destroyed.

[21] Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and Age of the Caliphates: The Islamic Near East from the Sixth to the Eleventh Century* (London: Longman, 1986), 169.

[22] See Introduction.

authority, of keeping one's oath of loyalty, and of the blessing of unity. For example: "O you who believe, obey God and the Prophet and those in authority among you; and if you are at variance over something refer it to God and the Messenger, if you believe in God and the Last Day."[23] Similarly, "As for those who have created schisms in their order, and formed different sects, have no concern with them. Their affair is with God. He will tell them the truth of what they are doing."[24] Other verses emphasize the Islamic principle of commanding right and forbidding wrong.[25] The tension is clear as in the following verse in which justice, obedience, and unity are all commended.

> Verily God enjoined justice, the doing of good, and the giving of gifts to your relatives; and has forbidden indecency, impropriety and oppression. He warns you so that you may remember. Fulfill your covenant with God, having made a covenant, and do not break your oaths once you have sworn them, as you have made God a witness over you. Indeed God knows what you do. And do not be like her who untwists her yarn having spun it into durable thread. Do not use your oaths deceitfully because one party has ascendancy over you. God surely tries you in this way: He will make it clear to you on the Day of Resurrection what you were differing about. If God had pleased He would surely have made you a single community of belief; but He leads whosoever he will astray, and guides whosoever He pleases. But you will surely be questioned about what you used to do.[26]

How to resolve the tension between obedience and justice and how did it affect relations with the state? It was up to the *ʿulamāʾ* to interpret these verses and they did so largely through the aid of *ḥadīths* and historical precedent.

Michael Cook notes that while the Qurʾanic verses on the duty of forbidding wrong usually imply that it is the obligation of the community as a whole, there are

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[23] Q 4:51.

[24] Q 6:159.

[25] Q 4:135 and Cook, *Commanding Right*, 13. Q 3:104; 3:110; 3:114; 7:157; 9:71; 9:112; 22:41; 31:17.

[26] Q 16:90-93

Traditions which stress the responsibility of the individual as well. Consider the *ḥadīth*, "The finest form of holy war (*jihād*) is speaking out (*kalimat ḥaqq*) in the presence of an unjust ruler (*sulṭān jā'ir*), and getting killed for it (*yuqtal ʿalayhā*)."[27] Although this clearly endorses confronting the unjust ruler, most scholars balanced this Tradition with others that warn against stirring up dissension and the more immediate evil of suicide.[28] The general consensus was that individual Muslims are called upon to forbid evil with their heart, their mouth, and their hands. If forbidding with the mouth or the hand would produce no good while causing other evils, such as one's own death or social chaos, than it is enough to forbid in one's heart.[29] Although this did not encourage rebellion, neither was it simply acquiescing. Rather it was the weighing of competing principles. Khaled Abou El Fadl argues this was done even more systematically through efforts to limit the wrongdoing of the state through drawing a legal distinction between fighting rebels (*bughāh*) and fighting brigands (*muḥāribūn*).

Jurists interpreted two different verses in the Qur'ān as one applying to rebels and another applying to bandits or highway robbers.[30] The *baghy* verse is as follows:

> If two groups of believers come to fight one another, promote peace between them. Then if one of them turns aggressive against the other, fight against the aggressive party till it returns to God's authority. If it does so, make peace among them equitably and be impartial. Verily God loves those who are just. The faithful are surely brothers; so restore friendship among your brothers and fear God that you may be favoured.[31]

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[27] Cook, *Commanding Right*, 6. He notes that this tradition appears in many *ḥadīth* collections; however, the last part about being killed does not appear in the most canonical collections.

[28] Q 2:195. "Cast not yourself by your own hands into destruction." Cook discusses al-Ghazālī's views on this verse. *Commanding Right*, 433.

[29] Though admittedly, Ibn Ḥazm and al-Ghazālī, among others, encouraged a more activist interpretation. Cook, *Commanding Right*, 427-468 and Khaled Abou El Fadl, "The Islamic Law of Rebellion," 243-251.

[30] Abou El Fadl, *Rebellion & Violence*, 32-61.

[31] Q 49:9-10.

Abou El Fadl shows how jurists interpreted this verse to mean if a group's disobedience was motivated by a religious interpretation (*ta'wīl*), even if deemed heretical, this was different than brigandage motivated by greed.[32] The former group, as rebels, could be resisted, but still had protected rights. For example, they should not be held responsible for life or property destroyed, and if they surrendered or retreated, their property should be restored to them and captives should not be killed or sold as slaves. It is significant that jurists looked for guidance in this interpretation to historical precedent, in particular the behavior of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭalib.

The baghy verse was contrasted with the *ḥirāba* verse which is as follows:

> The punishment for those who wage war against God and His prophet, and perpetrate disorders in the land, is to kill or hang them, or have a hand on one side and a foot on the other cut off, or banish them from the land. Such is their disgrace in the world, and in the hereafter their doom shall be dreadful. But those who repent before they are subdued should know that God is forgiving and kind.[33]

Abou El Fadl argues that by narrowing this verse to robbers and bandits rather than rebels, jurists removed the criticism of "perpetrating disorder" from those who criticize or rebel against the unjust actions of the government. He is careful to note, however, that the jurists did not encourage rebellion. As revealed in Cook's study, jurists were trying to negotiate competing values. Abou El Fadl insists it was the "legal imperative" rather than acquiescence that encouraged jurists to put a high premium on order and stability. He points out there is room for interpretations that are distinctly "unhelpful to the state."[34]

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[32] Abou El Fadl, *Rebellion & Violence*, 137.

[33] Q 5:33-4.

The efforts to negotiate competing principles, Qur'anic verses, and *ḥadīth* were compounded by the events of early Islamic history. Abou El Fadl notes,

> There is a certain tension in the *fitnah* discourse between the fear of civil strife and the historical precedent of political activism. Precedents for both political passivity and activism existed in Islamic history. The tension, however, was created because of the theological need to uphold the credibility of the Companions who adopted diametrically opposed positions on the use of force against fellow Muslims.[35]

The effort to reconcile principles with practice is clearly illustrated in al-Bukhārī's chapter on seditions (*fitnah*, pl. *fitan*) in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*.[36] The shadow of the first *fitnah* looms large over the *ḥadīths* as they seek to both condemn and condone the inter-Muslim violence that took place among the Companions. On the one hand Muḥammad predicted sedition and stated that those who instigated it would be fellow believers. Several *ḥadīth* describe those involved as reaching Paradise, i.e. Believers, but unable to reach Muḥammad.[37] The majority of the *ḥadīths*, however, condemn to hell those who depart from the Community or raise their sword against a fellow Muslim. This applies regardless of the impiety or injustice of the ruler. One *ḥadīth* states: "If you dislike something the amir does, be patient. For whoever goes out from a ruler (*sulṭān*) by an inch will die like those in the *jāhiliyyah* (time of ignorance before Islam)."[38] This is followed by a variant that says whoever dissents from the group an inch will die as in the *jāhiliyyah*. Muḥammad said once they had given the oath of loyalty (*bayʿa*), they must obey in prosperity and want unless it was a matter of *flagrant* unbelief.[39] Although these *ḥadīth* clearly prioritize unity and obedience, they also leave open whether those who instigate violence can still be saved, whether a ruler can be the one who "dissents from the group," as well as what constitutes "flagrant unbelief." The *ʿulamāʾ* used historical precedent to help interpret and evaluate these *ḥadīth* and each one of these issues is debated in the revolt against ʿUthmān.

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[34] Abou El Fadl adapts this phrase from Crone and Hinds who "maintain it was the rules of the Sunna that were unhelpful to the state." Abou El Fadl asserts, however, the Sunna "was a raw body of uninterpreted and undeveloped precedents. It is the legal interpretation of the Sunna, and not the Sunna itself, that was unhelpful to the state." *Rebellion and Violence*, 99, fn. 178.

[35] Abou El Fadl, *Rebellion and Violence*, 45.

[36] Al-Bukhārī, *Al-Ṣaḥīḥ* vol. 9 (Cairo: Dār wa-Maṭābʿa al-Shʿab), 58-77.

[37] Ibid., 58,59.

Even as the *ʿulamāʾ* sought to define the caliph's authority through their interpretation of legal, religious, and historical texts, Turkish commanders were limiting their authority in more tangible ways. Al-Maʾmūn succeeded to the caliphate in 198/813 after defeating his brother, al-Amīn, in the fourth *fitnah* or civil war (193-198/809- 813). Al-Maʾmūn acquired Turkish slave soldiers during this war and continued the practice in order to rebuild the defenses of the empire greatly depleted during the civil war and to defend his authority against those in Baghdad who were not particularly supportive.[40] During the reign of his successors the Turkish forces grew in number, power, and influence.[41] Upon the death of the caliph al-Wāthiq, two Turks participated in the council that elected his successor, al-Mutawakkil. Growing prominence led to growing tensions within the Turkish military, so that although al-Mutawakkil's reign was largely peaceful, he was murdered by a group of lower Turkish officers. In the ensuing struggles for authority, three and perhaps four of the next four caliphs were assassinated by Turks.[42] And when an "exhausted calm" was finally established between the caliph and the Turks, it was only after the Turks themselves had chosen the next caliph, al-Muʿtamid (r. 256-279/870-892).[43] Based on these developments, Hugh Kennedy concludes: "To both contemporaries and later historians it has seemed a time when the office of commander of the faithful was no more than a plaything in the hands of rival military factions, and when the paralysis of the central government allowed disaffection and separatism to flourish unchecked in the provinces."[44]

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[38] Ibid., 59.

[39] Ibid., 59-60. Emphasis added.

[40] El-Hibri looks at the legitimacy crisis faced by al-Maʾmūn due to the murder of his brother. *Reinterpreting*, 99-101.

[41] In fact the Caliph al-Muʿtaṣim's (218-227/833-842) support was based on their military might in the face of popular opposition in Baghdad so that in 221/836-7 the caliph moved the palace and Turkish guards to Samarra.

How did the *ʿulamāʾ* respond to this mockery of the caliphate and the resulting divisions and injustices? Matthew Gordon observes, "It seems clear that the appeal to Islamic norms by the Turkish leadership met, in effect, with skepticism if not outright rejection."[45] He believes al-Ṭabarī expressed this rejection in his *Taʾrīkh*, which reflected pro-Baghdadi and anti-Turkish biases, through prioritizing critical accounts of the Turks as well as composing his own.[46] Gordon also notes that most criticisms aimed at the Turks "are framed in terms of the injury visited by their behavior upon Islam, Islamic society, and Muslims. . . The Turks stood accused, it seems, of three specific if closely related transgressions: the usurpation of caliphal prerogative; the repression of society at large; and the plunder of public wealth."[47] It is noteworthy that ʿUthmān was accused of the latter two, and if one thought ʿAlī the rightful caliph, of the first one as well. All three compelling issues of the day – the legitimacy of the ʿAbbāsids vis-à-vis the ʿAlids, the delineation of political and religious authority, and the ridicule of Islamic principles of unity and justice by the caliph and the Turks – were directly related to representations of the revolt against ʿUthmān, when divisions and corruption first entered the community with clear consequences.

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[42] Kennedy describes the period 861-870 as "anarchy at Samarra." Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, 171. Matthew Gordon provides more details in *The Breaking of a Thousand Swords: A History of the Turkish Military of Samarra (A.H. 200-275/815-889 C.E.)* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2001). Al-Muntaṣir died in 248/862, "possibly of poisoning administered on orders from the Turkish leaders." Gordon, 90. Al-Mustaʿīn was forced to abdicate. Al-Muʿtazz was tortured and starved to death in 255/869. Al-Muhtadī tried to assert his authority against the Turks only to have his supporters routed. "Left defenseless, the caliph fled into the streets of Samarra, with Turkish troops in pursuit. His capture and execution quickly followed." Ibid., 104.

[43] Gordon, *The Breaking of a Thousand Swords*, 141.

[44] Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, 171. The biggest challenges came from ʿAlid revolts. Of the various challenges and factions, the biggest threat was the Zanj, a slave revolt originating in southern Iraq in 255/869 and only finally defeated in 270/883. "They were a threat not just because of their military prowess, or because they operated in the ʿAbbāsid heartland of Iraq, but because they presented a challenge to the whole ordering of society and established religion." Ibid., 179.

[45] Gordon, *The Breaking of a Thousand Swords*, 132.

THE NARRATORS

Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad b. Saʿd (168-230/784-845) is the author/compiler of the first Islamic biographical dictionary, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*.[48] As Michael Cooperson notes, "If poetry is 'the register of the Arabs,' biography merits the title 'register of the Muslims.'"[49] The biographical dictionaries of Ibn Saʿd and al-Balādhurī were just the first in a long and distinguished genre that coexisted with and sometimes superseded chronicles as the main vehicle for Islamic writings about the past. Ibn Saʿd was originally from Basra, but traveled and studied widely before settling in Baghdad where he became al-Wāqidī's scribe. Because Ibn Saʿd's own writings were compiled primarily from the works of his predecessors, especially al-Wāqidī, it is generally assumed that he repeats and reflects the biases of his teacher. However, when contrasted with the al-Wāqidī material in al-Ṭabarī and al-Balādhurī, what stands out is the way Ibn Saʿd minimizes praise for ʿAlī and criticism of ʿUthmān.

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[46] Ibid., 13.
[47] Ibid., 132.
[48] Muḥammad ibn Saʿd, *Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr*, ed. Joseph Horovitz and Edward Sachan (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1904).
[49] Cooperson, "The Heirs of the Prophets," 36.

After al-Ṭabarī, it is Abū Jaʿfar Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Jābir al-Balādhurī (d. 279/892) who is perhaps the best known historian from the early ʿAbbāsid period.[50] Al-Balādhurī was a "boon companion" of the Caliph al-Mutawakkil and enjoyed court patronage over a long period.[51] He is best known for his *Kitāb futūh al-buldān*, a history of the early conquests, and *Kitāb ansāb al-ashrāf*, a "biographical-historical collection" of the honorable Companions.[52] In the biography of ʿUthmān in the *Ansāb al-ashrāf*, al-Balādhurī relies very heavily on Ibn Saʿd, who was one of his teachers, and through him al-Wāqidī. Due to the nature of his sources, one would expect to find a pro-ʿAlid bias in his narrative.[53] But as Humphreys has pointed out, such expectations "fall to the ground" upon closer analysis.[54] It is true that al-Balādhurī marshals together perhaps the most extensive catalogue of ʿUthmān's errors and abuses.[55] But he also begins (as a biographical work) with *ḥadīths* that defend ʿUthmān and *akhbār* that legitimate the *shūrā* and the choice of ʿUthmān. In his narrative, ʿAlī supported ʿUthmān's caliphate and it was primarily other Companions who were critical and stirred up the people against ʿUthmān. Thus he could be considered "proto-Sunnī" for defending the order of the *Rāshidūn* Caliphs.

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[50] For the section on ʿUthmān in al-Balādhurī's *Kitāb ansāb al-ashrāf*, I use the translation by Waguida al-Bakary, "A Translation and Critical Assessment of the Reign of ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān based on al-Balādhurī's *Ansāb al-ashrāf*" (M.A. thesis, American University in Cairo, 1975).

[51] Al-Balādhurī, 195. However, at the end of his life, during the reign of al-Mu'tamid, he lost court favor and went into the streets begging.

[52] Humphreys, *Islamic History*, 99.

[53] Al-Balādhurī provides what appears to be complete *isnads* for all his accounts, but Wilferd Madelung says al-Balādhurī frequently omits *isnāds*. *The Succession to Muḥammad*, 376. It may be that he omits a name in the chain of transmission, but this does not hinder our focus on the content or origin of the account. In his section on ʿUthmān in the *Ansāb al-ashrāf* there are almost 95 quotations attributed to al-Wāqidī, Ibn Saʿd is quoted about 76 times, and most of this material constitutes an oral transmission from al-Wāqidī. Al-Madā'inī has 43 account citations and Abū Mikhnaf is quoted 39 times. Aḥmad b. Ibrahim al-Dawraqī (28), Hishām b. Muḥammad b. al-Sāʿid al-Kalbī (23), ʿAbbās b. Hishām al-Kalbī (19) Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (17), ʿAmr b. Muḥammd al-Nāqid (15) Muḥammad b. Sīrīn (14).

Certainly Abū Jaʿfar Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923) is the most influential and well known of the chroniclers from the ʿAbbāsid period. Unlike al-Balādhurī, he never held an official post and tried to distance himself from the (often corrupt) centers of power. This distance may have influenced his focus on principles rather than practice. His *Taʾrīkh al-rusūl wa'l-mulūk* (*The History of Prophets and Kings*) and *Qurʾanic Commentary* "form the most extensive of extant early works of Islamic scholarship and they preserve for us the greatest array of citations from lost sources."[56] Al-Ṭabarī's *Taʾrīkh* is a universal history beginning with creation; from the time of the Prophet it is organized annalistically and ends in the year 302/915.[57] Al-Ṭabarī represents the triumph of the *ḥadīth* sciences, as he rigorously includes an *isnād* for each *khabar*. However, he also suggests a growing distinction between

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[54] Humphreys, *Islamic History*, 102.

[55] These are based largely on al-Wāqidī, even though Ibn Saʿd himself chose not to include them. Even more troubling is that many of the accounts attributed to Ibn Saʿd do not appear in the *Ṭabaqāt*.

[56] C.E. Bosworth, "Al-Ṭabarī," *EI*^{2}.

[57] Al-Ṭabarī, *The History of al-Ṭabarī, vol. XIV: The Conquest of Iran*, trans. G. Rex Smith (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994) covers ʿUthmān's election while the remainder of his caliphate and murder is in *The History of al-Ṭabarī,vol. XV: The Crisis of the Early Caliphate*, trans. R. Stephen Humphreys (Albany: SUNY Press, 1990).

khabar and *ḥadīth*; he includes none of the latter either at the beginning or end of his section on ʿUthmān.[58] In his section on ʿUthmān, or more rightly, the years 23-35/ 644-656, al-Ṭabarī juxtaposes the accounts by al-Wāqidī (And Ibn Isḥāq and Abū Mikhnaf) that criticize ʿUthmān with those by Sayf b. ʿUmar that defend ʿUthmān.[59] These accounts also juxtapose appeals to the principles of unity and justice. Therefore, al-Ṭabarī's synthesis retains a great deal of contradictory material which later chroniclers could select and edit as they chose.

Ibn Saʿd, al-Balādhurī, and al-Ṭabarī's reliance on a common source, al-Wāqidī, make them ideal for understanding how contrasting religio-political positions were expressed through strategies of composition.[60] Ibn Saʿd defends ʿUthmān's personal piety and his caliphate, while largely avoiding the question of ʿAlī. ʿAlī is virtually absent from his narrative, with little mention of his support for ʿUthmān and certainly no evidence that he opposed him. Relying also on al-Wāqidī, al-Balādhurī negotiates a more complex position for ʿAlī. Although al-Balādhurī contrasts ʿAlī's virtues with ʿUthmān's vices, he also defends the institution of the caliphate and the order of the first four caliphs. In addition to defending ʿUthmān and ʿAlī, al-Balādhurī appears intent on defending the absolute authority of the caliph over those basing their authority on religion and piety. In contrast, al-Ṭabarī presents the greatest threat to caliphal authority not as coming from rival individuals or groups, but rather from the failure to carry out the very principles that were the basis of its legitimacy: unity and justice.

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[58] This omission naturally leaves out material that could be used to defend and praise ʿUthmān. The choice, however, seems to be a matter of form rather than content.

[59] Humphreys argues that al-Ṭabarī flanks the Sayf accounts with those by al-Wāqidī and others as commentaries and critiques so that the astute reader realizes they can accept Sayf's version as a matter of religious faith, but not established knowledge. Humphreys, "Qur'anic Myth," 280. Jacob Lassner has questioned the belief in "medieval analysis based on the subtle positioning of sources" supported by Humphreys. Lassner, *The Middle East Remembered: Forged Identities, Competing Narratives, Contested Spaces* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 27 fn. 34. In *Islamic Revolution*, however, Lassner supports belief in a chronicler's subtlety of argument if it is expressed through careful editing of his sources.

[60] All three give complete *isnāds* for all their reports.

The relationship between these religio-political interpretations and representations of the past is further highlighted through comparisons with two additional ʿAbbāsid sources. Of particular note are the *Taʾrīkh* of Khalīfah b. Khayyāṭ al-ʿUṣfurī (d. 854/240)[61] and ʿUmar b. Shabbah's (d. 262/876) history of Medina, *Taʾrīkh al-madīnah al-munawwarah* (*Akhbār al-madīnah al-nabawiyyah*).[62] For the sake of brevity and clarity I do not develop the narrative strategies of these authors, but contrast points of detail, in order to highlight the arguments and methods of the other three primary authors. Moreover, most of this comparative analysis is conducted in the footnotes.[63] What emerges from such a comparison, however, is the limitations of a strictly Sunnī-Shīʿite paradigm that was still under formation during the ninth century.[64] Moving beyond it, we find authors presenting a range of recognizably orthodox Sunnī positions on the foundation and limits of caliphal authority that reflect contemporary context and personal conviction. In addition to analyzing the literary strategies used to convey such concerns, the following section lays out the basic contours of the narrative of the revolt against ʿUthmān developed in this century and utilized by subsequent generations of historians and biographers.

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[61] Khalīfah ibn Khayyāṭ, *Taʾrīkh Khalīfah b. Khayyāṭ*, ed. Akram Ḍiyāʾ al-ʿUmarī (Iraq: al-Majmaʿ al-ʿIlmī al-ʿIrāqī, 1967). Like Ibn Saʿd, he was born in Basra, but he appears to have been educated and to have taught exclusively in his native city, not traveling to other cities as was then customary. Ibn Saʿd described him as a worthy man with ʿUthmānī tendencies. Ibn Khayyāṭ was a prominent chronicler and genealogist who specialized in the study of tradition. He also wrote a *Ṭabaqāt* and his *Taʾrīkh* is the oldest extant complete survey of early Islamic history. His *Taʾrīkh* has survived in a copy found in Morocco (the only copy so far known) in a single volume of 168 folios. It was copied in Muslim Spain in 477/1084. S. Zakkar, "Ibn Khayyaṭ al-ʿUṣfurī," *EI*^{2}.

[62] Abū Zayd ʿUmar b. Shabbah al-Numayrī al-Baṣrī. *Taʾrīkh al-madīnah al-munawwarah*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥammad Dadhal and Yāsīn Saʿd al-Dīn Byān (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1996). Ibn Shabbah was also from Basra, resided in Samarra for some time where he refused to bow to the pressure of the *miḥnah*. Consequently some of his books were destroyed and he refused to lecture for a period. S. Leder, "ʿUmar b. Shabba," *EI*^{2}.

[63] Ibn Khayyāṭ's narrative of ʿUthmān is very similar to Ibn Saʿd's. Like him he defends ʿUthmān and his caliphate. However, whereas in Ibn Saʿd, ʿAlī is virtually absent from the narrative, Ibn Khayyāṭ develops much more ʿAlī's support for ʿUthmān's caliphate. Ibn Shabbah presents his narrative of the revolt in three consecutive and concentric accounts. The first blames the revolt on the tension between obedience and justice. As the rings of the revolt tighten so does Ibn Shabbah's explanatory framework; he shifts blame to the *shīʿah* of ʿUthmān and the *shīʿah* of ʿAlī. He uses the term "shīʿah" for both groups and more often than I have seen in other sources. Finally, he blames Marwān b.

THE NARRATIVES

The narrative of ʿUthmān is organized around five chapters or "scenes:" ʿUthmān's *sīrah* (conduct), his *shūrā* (elective council), his caliphate, his siege, and his murder. In an effort to move beyond the Sunnī-Shīʿite dichotomy, and focus on the larger implications of the revolt against ʿUthmān within Sunnī discourse, I discuss ʿUthmān's *sīrah* and *shūrā* only briefly and focus on the latter three stages of the narrative.[65]

Sīrah

What stands out in al-Wāqidī's narrative is that to the extent he praises ʿUthmān, he relies on historical events rather than *ḥadīth*. Al-Wāqidī is the major source for ʿUthmān's physical appearance and it is these accounts that we see, not only in Ibn Saʿd, al-Balādhurī, and al-Ṭabarī, but in most biographies and histories. Whereas Ibn Saʿd relies almost exclusively on al-Wāqidī accounts that generally

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Ḥakam. The way Ibn Shabbah juxtaposes obedience and justice and deals with all the complaints against ʿUthmān through the verbal confrontations during the siege, are two features reminiscent of al-Ṭabarī's narrative. We know that al-Ṭabarī used Ibn Shabbah as a source, and it is possible he was also influenced by him in his organizational structure. This is particularly interesting since Ibn Shabbah does not use any accounts by Sayf b. ʿUmar and only a few by al-Wāqidī.

[64] E.L. Petersen focuses on the Sunnī-Shīʿite paradigm in these sources in *ʿAlī and Muʿāwiya*.

[65] See Humphreys' discussion of al-Balādhurī's treatment of the *shūrā* in *Islamic History*, 98-103.

praise ʿUthmān, the accounts transmitted by al-Wāqidī found in al-Balādhurī, are more ambivalent. For example, we are told ʿUthmān trafficked in goods, taking a half share of the proceeds,[66] but also when ʿUthmān discovered Muḥammad had gone out in search of food, ʿUthmān sent a sheep to every house.[67] Rather than praising ʿUthmān for performing the ablution before every prayer, al-Wāqidī, in al-Balādhurī, informs us he did so because he was "incontinent of urine."[68] But in addition to these accounts, al-Balādhurī includes a great deal of *ḥadīth* material which praise ʿUthmān's spiritual virtues, primarily his humility, generosity, and knowledge.[69]

Al-Balādhurī includes *ḥadīth* which portray Muḥammad praising ʿUthmān for using his wealth for the benefit of the Muslim community, namely by buying the well of Rūmah, buying the land to enlarge the mosque in Medina, and supplying the Prophet's army. In another *ḥadīth* Muḥammad associated ʿUthmān with his two predecessors as "the friend and the two martyrs," not only linking them together over ʿAlī, but designating ʿUthmān's death as martyrdom.[70] These *ḥadīth* will come to be a part of the canon on ʿUthmān, but among the ninth century sources, al-Balādhurī alone relies on them in a distinct section on ʿUthmān's conduct and virtues.[71] The last account in al-Balādhurī's section, however, criticizes ʿUthmān for not following ʿUmar's example.[72] Throughout his narrative, al-Balādhurī provides a wide range of accounts, many of them critical of ʿUthmān, but the first and final accounts in every section always appear to provide the context for the entire section.

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[66] Al-Balādhurī, 5

[67] Ibid., 15.

[68] Ibid., 8.

[69] Asfaruddin notes how the claims to possess religious and general knowledge (*ʿilm*) became increasingly important in debates between the *ahl al-sunnah* and *shīʿah* of ʿAlī on who was more qualified to become the caliph-imām. Asfaruddin, "In Praise," 339-40.

[70] Al-Balādhurī, 11. Ibn Khayyāṭ mentions these two *ḥadīths* as well, but they are expressed by ʿUthmān in his own defense during the siege, rather than as independent *ḥadīth*. Ibn Khayyāṭ, 149-50.

[71] In the verbal confrontations between ʿUthmān and his attackers, Ibn Saʿd includes the *ḥadīth* from ʿĀʾishah in which Muḥammad predicts the *fitnah* and encourages ʿUthmān to endure it patiently. (46). Al-Ṭabarī also mentions it in these confrontations, but in the words of ʿUthmān, not as an independent *ḥadīth*. (204)

[72] Al-Balādhurī, 25.

Al-Ṭabarī places the section on ʿUthmān's conduct at the end of his narrative of the revolt.[73] He includes no *ḥadīth*, but instead juxtaposes accounts by Sayf b. ʿUmar and al-Wāqidī. Sayf provides a resume of ʿUthmān's caliphate that defends his actions and blames events on heresies and divisions in the community. ʿUthmān defended his behavior in the form of a letter to the garrison towns. A letter is also at the heart of al-Wāqidī's account. Rather than specific actions, however, ʿUthmān's letter is a series of Qur'anic verses that emphasize the importance of obedience, unity, and the oath of loyalty – in fact the same verses cited above.[74] Recognizing al-Ṭabarī's "strategy of placement," I reserve analysis of his decision to conclude with such a letter, read out by Ibn ʿAbbās and transmitted by al-Wāqidī, for the conclusion of this chapter.

Shūrā

The al-Wāqidī accounts found in Ibn Saʿd defend the method of the *shūrā* and the choice of ʿUthmān, while portraying ʿAlī in a small, supportive role. The six members of the *shūrā* are appointed and praised by ʿUmar and all appear equally worthy of the caliphate.[75] Compared to later chronicles, there is almost a studied indifference to ʿAlī; no mention is made of his claims to the caliphate nor is the choice narrowed down to ʿUthmān and ʿAlī. The only special mention of ʿAlī is that after ʿUthmān was chosen caliph, ʿAlī was the first[76] or the second[77] to give him the oath of allegiance.[78] These same accounts appear in al-Balādhurī,[79] but he gives additional al-Wāqidī accounts that provide a much more complex picture of the *shūrā* and ʿAlī's claims to the caliphate.

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[73] By placing this section at the end rather than the beginning of the narrative, al-Ṭabarī foreshadows what will come to dominate subsequent annalistic chronicles when the biographies of those who have died are placed at the end of each year.

[74] Al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 240-245.

[75] Ibn Saʿd, 42

The al-Wāqidī accounts in al-Balādhurī defend ʿAlī's right to the caliphate then and the ʿAbbāsids' right to the caliphate now. The al-Wāqidī accounts show the disagreements among the *shūrā* members in which the issue is clearly presented as the choice between ʿAlī and ʿUthmān.[80] They also portray tribal and marriage alliances among the *shūrā* members working against ʿAlī. But it is al-ʿAbbās who pointed out this fact to ʿAlī and warned him not to participate in the *shūrā*.[81] Moreover, when the *shūrā* members chose ʿUthmān, it was al-ʿAbbās who went to ʿAlī and blamed him for not taking his advice and being more pro-active. This allows the ʿAbbāsids to be pro-ʿAlid and recognize ʿAlī's worthiness of the caliphate, while also blaming the ʿAlids' loss of the caliphate on ʿAlī himself. It makes the ʿAbbāsids supporters of the ʿAlids and not usurpers. It is not clear whether this reflects al-

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[76] Ibid., 43.

[77] Ibid., 42; al-Balādhurī, 39.

[78] Ella Landau-Tasseron argues the *bayʿa* was what conferred authority. She states, "The Prophet's death meant the removal of the pivot on which the community's identity hinged, and ʿUmar's act [of giving Abū Bakr the *bayʿa*] fixed the new pivot." In "From Tribal Society to Centralized Polity,".187.

[79] Al-Balādhurī, 26, 30, 32, 34.

[80] Once again, it is noteworthy that although many of these accounts are via Ibn Saʿd, they do not appear in his *Ṭabaqāt*, suggesting Ibn Saʿd was trying to limit the prestige of ʿAlī and thus the case of the pro-ʿAlids.

[81] Al-Balādhurī, 33. Another account from Abū Mikhnaf portrays ʿAlī fearing a coalition between ʿAbd al-Raḥmān, ʿUthmān and Saʿd. It is ʿAlī who complains to his uncle, al-ʿAbbās and appeals to Saʿd's kinship with him, urging him not to side with ʿAbd al-Raḥmān and ʿUthmān against him. Al-Balādhurī, 34-5.

Wāqidī's loyalty to the ʿAbbāsids, al-Balādhurī's, or both.[82] However, al-Balādhurī further defends the outcome of history in regard to ʿUthmān and the ʿAbbāsids by beginning the narrative of the *shūrā* with accounts that support the theoretical principle of the *shūrā* and the oath of allegiance[83] and concludes it with accounts that defend the choice of ʿUthmān.[84]

Al-Ṭabarī's narrative shows a similarly complex evaluation of the *shūrā*, ʿUthmān, and ʿAlī, while also foreshadowing the divisions that would follow. Al-Ṭabarī includes the same account about al-ʿAbbās and ʿAlī, but attributes it to Abū Mikhnaf.[85] Thus al-Ṭabarī finds a similar compromise between appeasing ʿAlid sympathies while endorsing the legitimacy of the ʿAbbāsid caliphate. Moreover, the Abū Mikhnaf account in al-Ṭabarī records ʿAlī's response when al-ʿAbbās blamed him for participating in the *shūrā*. ʿAlī responded: "I do not like dissension." Here we see early on al-Ṭabarī's concern with unity in the community. In this way al-Ṭabarī sympathizes with those loyal to the house of ʿAlī while criticizing later ʿAlids who would threaten the unity of the community by pointing out that even ʿAlī deferred his rights for the sake of unity.[86]

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[82] Al-Balādhurī's service for the ʿAbbāsid court has already been mentioned above. Professor Horovitz has commented on al-Wāqidī's support as well in "Al-Wāqidī," *EI*.
[83] Al-Balādhurī, 26.
[84] Ibid., 39-40. Al-Balādhurī concludes the section with three variant accounts with different *isnāds* in which ʿAbdallāh b. Masʿūd says the best person was chosen. Stephen Humphreys has noted this is "an evaluation which is all the more significant because Ibn Masʿūd is normally portrayed as a severe critic of ʿUthmān's regime." Humphreys, *Islamic History*, 101.
[85] Al-Ṭabarī, *The Conquest of Iran*, 143.
[86] ʿAlī also warned Ibn ʿAwf to not show preference for his relatives and so "let down" the community. Ibid., 149. But the account also shows ʿUmar urging them to follow Ibn ʿAwf's decision. Ibid., 144. ʿUmar wanted to appoint the person he thought was most suitable and indicated ʿAlī, but then said he had a dream that made him decide he did not want to be responsible for the caliphate in death as well as in life. Lassner has argued for the significance of this subtext that undermines ʿAlī's right to the

Al-Ṭabarī also includes a version of the *shūrā* transmitted on the authority of Muḥammad b. Maslamah in which ʿAlī was deceived by his nemesis, ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ.[87] It records how Ibn ʿAwf gave ʿUthmān the *bayʿa*, ʿAlī cried out he was deceived, and only gave ʿUthmān the *bayʿa* when he was warned of the importance of unity.[88] This account argues for the importance of unity while also showing a preference for ʿAlī. However, it also records ʿAlī stating that he was not designated by Muḥammad, and this would reflect a pro-ʿAlid but not Shīʿite, view of events. In fact ʿAlī later made a distinctly anti-Shīʿite remark, "Perhaps you will see swords drawn and agreements broken in this matter after this council, until you become one united group, and some of you become leaders over those in error and over partisans (*shīʿah*) of the ignorant."[89] This condemns those who drew swords against and broke their agreements to ʿUthmān. It also says those who continue to dissent once unity is restored are in error. Once again ʿAlī is praised while his current supporters are condemned, by ʿAlī's own words.

Caliphate of ʿUthmān (or Complaints against ʿUthmān)

In terms of the complaints against ʿUthmān, we find three different approaches in our three authors. Ibn Saʿd gives only the sparsest details, downplaying the conflict, ʿUthmān's responsibility for it, and ʿAlī's role in defusing it. In contrast, al-Balādhurī, of all the sources I consider from this period, gives the most extensive

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caliphate by denying he was designated caliph by either Muḥammad or ʿUmar. Lassner, *Islamic Revolution*, 17-18.

[87] Al-Ṭabarī, *The Conquest of Iran*, 161.

[88] He only gave the *bayʿa* after Ibn ʿAwf reminded him that God punishes those who do not keep their oaths. Q 48:10.

[89] Al-Ṭabarī, *The Conquest of Iran*, 158.

list of ʿUthmān's abuses.[90] However, as in his section on the *shūrā*, the critical accounts are bracketed between those that defend the absolute authority of the ruler, regardless of his vice or virtue. Moreover, al-Balādhurī puts forward a theory for how to limit the injustices of arbitrary rule. Repeatedly ʿUthmān is confronted by religious leaders, repents, makes amends, and is forgiven. Al-Balādhurī describes the ideal Islamic relationship between a ruler and his religious advisors. They may confront him while still upholding his right to rule, and he should repent and restore justice. Al-Ṭabarī, on the other hand, focuses on the sometimes conflicting ideals of obedience and justice without suggesting any clear compromise for how these are to be worked out in real life.

The most commonly listed complaints against ʿUthmān are that he appointed family members to key government posts, used the public treasury for his personal benefit, increased the caliph's allotment of land and tax revenue, made religious innovations, destroyed the Qur'ān, and exiled pious individuals and religious leaders.[91] All the sources agree that the strongest criticisms against ʿUthmān came from his nepotism and appointment of relatives to governorships, because this policy marked a return to pre-Islamic values and loyalties and thus threatened the very foundations of the new Muslim community.[92] ʿUthmān's appointment of his half-brother, al-Walīd b. ʿUqbah, as governor in Kufa is emblematic of the larger problems facing the community. My analysis consequently focuses on this event, followed by the escalating confrontations that led ultimately to ʿUthmān's being besieged in his house in Medina.

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[90] These are largely pragmatic and not unique to ʿUthmān, such as appointing corrupt officials, not checking up on officials (especially tax collectors), and being overly generous from the public treasury with his family and friends.

[91] Al-Wāqidī states the first thing people complained about was in year twenty-nine when on the hajj ʿUthmān knelt four times in prayer, rather than the prescribed two. Al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis,* 38-40; al-Balādhurī, 65.

Ibn Saʿd/ Al-Wāqidī

One of the key questions in the caliphate of ʿUthmān is when did the problems begin and how did they first enter the community.[93] Was it at the *shūrā*, mistakes the first year, or after six years when he either became lax in his affairs or lost the Prophet's signet ring?[94] All three of our sources for al-Wāqidī include his report that in the first six years no one held anything against ʿUthmān.[95] But there is a darker premonition, for al-Wāqidī also says ʿUthmān was more beloved by Quraysh because he was not strict with them as ʿUmar had been. Moreover, in the last six years of his reign he "became slack in his affairs" and appointed members of his family and his house to government posts. The al-Wāqidī accounts in Ibn Saʿd and al-Balādhurī continue: "and he gave to Marwān a fifth [of the booty from the conquest] of Egypt, and gave his relatives money, and borrowed from the treasury."[96] This is virtually all Ibn Saʿd says on the issue of governors and money, and we are left to rely on al-Balādhurī and al-Ṭabarī, who both give much more detailed accounts.

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[92] Ella Landau-Tasseron suggests ʿUthmān's appointments were part of a logical process of centralization. He was murdered because he was "some years ahead of his time." In "Tribal Society," 199.

[93] Ibn Khayyāṭ makes no mention of any problems in the provinces until year 34. Ibn Khayyāṭ, 144.

[94] Al-Ṭabarī alone of the sources considered here gives a report in year 30, the sixth year of ʿUthmān's reign, in which he lost the signet ring of the Prophet when it fell from his finger into a well. Al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 62-64. This is seen as symbolizing his loss of "God's guidance and support, and the negation of his claim to be the Prophet's legitimate successor." Donner, *Narratives*, 193. See discussion of Donner above. This account is transmitted in al-Ṭabarī by Ibn ʿAbbās.

[95] There is a counter narrative that claims problems entered the community from the very beginning when ʿUthmān disobeyed ʿUmar and started changing governors immediately. Al-Balādhurī, 50.

Al-Balādhurī

Al-Balādhurī's narrative of al-Walīd highlights the spread of moral corruption and contrasts ʿUthmān's ruthlessness with ʿAlī's prudence. In the al-Wāqidī accounts included by al-Balādhurī, ʿUthmān appointed al-Walīd during the first year of his reign.[97] Al-Balādhurī includes three brief accounts based on al-Wāqidī from Ibn Saʿd that deal with al-Walīd drinking wine. The first says he simply drank wine,[98] the second that he led the prayers while drunk,[99] and the third, he was so intoxicated that Abū Zubayd and two others were able to sneak in and remove his signet ring from his hand without his being aware of it.[100]

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[96] The account concludes with ʿUthmān stating that Abū Bakr and ʿUmar had the same right but did not exercise it. ʿUthmān divided it up among his relatives and the people complained about this: Ibn Saʿd,.44; al-Balādhurī, 43. Al-Ṭabarī includes very few such complaints in his narrative of ʿUthmān's caliphate; they emerge more in verbal confrontations during the revolt itself. Al-Ṭabarī relies almost exclusively on accounts by Sayf to deal with the controversial aspects of ʿUthmān's rule, and these defend ʿUthmān and the unity of the community.

[97] In an account based on al-Wāqidī and Abū Mikhnaf, when al-Walīd arrived in Kufa the people significantly responded: "What a base thing ʿUthmān has given us as a substitute! He deposed the easy, lenient and pleasant Abū Ishāq, the Companion of the Messenger of God, and has appointed his dissolute, dissipated, foolish, and imprudent brother." The Narrators observe: "The people considered this too much." Al-Balādhurī, 50. The account continues by pointing out ʿUthmān also removed Abū Mūsā from Basra and replaced him with ʿUthmān's cousin, ʿAbdallāh b. ʿĀmir b. Kurayz. ʿAlī, Ṭalḥah, and al-Zubayr all confronted ʿUthmān saying, "Did not ʿUmar urged you not to favor the family of Abū Mu'ayt and Banu Umayya at the expense of the people?" ʿUthmān had no answer. Al-Balādhurī, 51.

[98] Ibid., 52.

[99] Ibid., 57. Clearly leading the prayers drunk was a serious offence and al-Balādhurī highlights this by including several accounts of it. But such behavior was not unheard of in the days of ʿUmar either.

[100] In another account from al-Wāqidī and Ibn Saʿd we are told that al-Walīd was friends with a man named Abū Zubayd, but it is Abū Mikhnaf who relates the more controversial aspects of this relationship and the incident of the stolen signet ring. Ibid., 53. It is from other sources in al-Balādhurī that we are told Abū Zubayd and others then carried the ring to ʿUthmān and testified against him. Ibid., 56.

The al-Wāqidī accounts in al-Balādhurī not only focus on al-Walīd's abuses, but juxtapose ʿUthmān's refusal to punish al-Walīd with ʿAlī's demand that Qur'anic laws (*ḥadd*, pl. *ḥudūd*) be observed.[101] According to al-Wāqidī, ʿUthmān flogged some of the witnesses against al-Walīd and they complained to ʿAlī. ʿAlī then confronted ʿUthmān stating: "You have set aside the *ḥadd* penalties, beaten men who have testified against your brother, and you have upset authority. ʿUmar said: 'do not favor Banū Umayyah and the family of Banū Muʿayt at the expense of the people.'"[102] ʿUthmān then asked what ʿAlī suggested he do and ʿAlī responded he should remove al-Walīd, and if the witnesses against him prove reliable, carry out the *ḥadd* punishment. ʿUthmān had al-Walīd brought to Medina and appointed Saʿīd b. al-ʿĀṣ as governor of Kufa.[103] However, ʿUthmān was still culpable because he then sent various members of Quraysh to whip al-Walīd, but none of them would do it when al-Walīd convinced them ʿUthmān would be angry with them. In the end it was ʿAlī who had to carry out the punishment.[104] The fear and chaos produced by ʿUthmān is contrasted with ʿAlī's virtue, symbolized by his carrying out of the prescribed Qur'anic punishment.[105]

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[101] Enforcing *ḥudūd* and adopting an austere lifestyle were two ways the caliph al-Ma'mūn sought to legitimize his political authority after the civil war with his brother and his religious authority before the ***miḥnah***. El-Hibri, ***Reinterpreting***, 102.

[102] Al-Balādhurī, 58.

[103] Based on Ibn Saʿd – al-Wāqidī and Abū Mikhnaf. The account states that Saʿīd washed the ***minbar*** when he arrived in Kufa. Ibid., 59 Other accounts state that it was washed because al-Walīd vomited while in the pulpit,

[104] Al-Balādhurī, 59-60. Al-Balādhurī reiterates these points by including a similar version of them based on Abū Mikhnaf. Abū Mikhnaf is even more critical, criticizing al-Walīd for not only drinking, but consorting with Christians and sorcerers. Al-Balādhurī, 55-57.

[105] We once again see al-Balādhurī's strategy of placement when he concludes the section with a record of what al-Walīd supposedly said while he was being whipped. He said, "May God separate you and me; Banū Umayyah are my relations and my kin. If money is abundant, you will not be

Al-Balādhurī repeatedly shapes his narrative to defend the rights of the ᶜAbbāsid caliphs against those basing their authority on the Qur᾿ān and personal piety. In the al-Walīd affair this comes through in an account attributed to Abū Mikhnaf. Even after ᶜUthmān removed al-Walīd and replaced him with Saᶜīd b. al-ᶜĀṣ, problems continued in Kufa. "Saᶜīd used to sit in the company of its reciters and its distinguished citizens and chat with them."[106] When disagreements broke out in this assembly, Saᶜīd wrote to ᶜUthmān: "I cannot keep control over Kufa while al-Ashtar and his friends, who claim to be reciters but are [in fact] foolish, [are in it]."[107] Al-Balādhurī then gives the transcript of several letters which were produced by the conflict in Kufa.[108] In this exchange of letters, al-Balādhurī grants men of religion the right to warn the caliph, but at their own risk, and with no recourse to outright rebellion. Moreover, although there is general appeal to the Qur᾿ān, al-Balādhurī does not actually quote any verses from the Qur᾿ān that would condemn ᶜUthmān – or any other ruler for that matter.[109] As noted above, ᶜUthmān makes numerous mistakes in the al-Walīd narrative, but al-Balādhurī defended the authority of the

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criticized; just as the *mawlā* who has money does not find fault with his Lords." Ibid., 61. Is al-Balādhurī condemning the Umayyads and al-Walīd or warning the ᶜAbbāsids of how to maintain popular support?

[106] Al-Balādhurī, 67. There is ambiguity over whether the term *qurrā* means Qur᾿ān reciters or *ahl al-qurā* (men of the towns). See T. Nagel "*Ḳurrā*," *EI*^{2} for a summary (without resolution) of the literature. The issue is also discussed by R.S. Humphreys in his translation of al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 112, fn. 194. Based on context, Humphreys chooses to use the traditional interpretation of "Qur᾿ān reciters" and I believe the same holds true for al-Balādhurī as well.

[107] Al-Balādhurī, 68.

[108] Ella Landau-Tasseron has pointed out how speeches and letters often migrate through narratives. Thus the focus should be on their content more than their context; they form discrete rhetorical units. Landau-Tasseron, "New Data on an old Manuscript: An Andalusian Version of the works entitled *Futūḥ al-Shām*," *Al-Qantara* 11:2 (2000): 370-72.

[109] Al-Balādhurī also summarizes in a few sentences ᶜUthmān's letters of self defense which consist primarily of Qur᾿anic verses. That al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Shabbah, and Ibn Aᶜtham all include full transcripts of these letters further highlights al-Balādhurī's choice to limit the Qur᾿anic material in his narrative.

caliph despite clear evidence of injustice. This is very different from the confrontations recorded in al-Ṭabarī in which ʿUthmān and his detractors cite the Qurʾān to support their demands for justice or unity – at any cost.

The first letter in al-Balādhurī is from the Qurʾān reciters who wrote to ʿUthmān to complain about Saʿīd's treatment of them. They claimed Saʿīd "was antagonistic towards some of the people of piety, virtue and uprightness. He caused you to treat them in a way which is not justified in religion or fitting to hear about."[110] ʿUthmān wanted to punish them and indeed did have Kaʿb b. ʿAbda, who had written a similar letter, whipped. Kaʿb had written to ʿUthmān warning him:

> The *imara* of the believers only came to you by virtue of the *shūrā* when you made a pledge to God to follow the sira of His Prophet and not to fall short of it. If they were to consult us about you a second time, we would transfer it [the *imara*] from you. O ʿUthmān, the Book of God is for whomever it has reached and [whoever] has recited it; we have recited it just as you have. If the reciter [of the Qurʾān] does not follow what is in it, it becomes an argument against him.[111]

In this letter the caliphate is bestowed by and to those who follow the Qurʾān. Abū Mikhnaf gives two similar versions of these confrontations and the subsequent whipping of Kaʿb b. ʿAbda.[112] But both end however, when ʿUthmān repented, asked Kaʿb to whip him, Kaʿb refused, and instead forgave ʿUthmān. Through repetition, al-Balādhurī presents a model of the relationship between the caliph and those claiming authority based on the Qurʾān and their personal piety. The caliph may abuse his authority, and others may confront him with right religion, but there is no further action from the caliph's accusers.[113] Moreover, although ʿUthmān punished them, apparently unfairly, he was redeemed in the end; when confronted the ruler *should* admit his mistakes, repent, and rectify the situation.

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[110] Al-Balādhurī, 69. The letter concludes, "We bear witness against you before God and God is a sufficient witness. You are our amīr as long as you obey God and act uprightly. You will not find, other than God, any refuge or saviour."

[111] Ibid., 71.

[112] This account has the added twist that Marwān was the one who encouraged ʿUthmān to beat the messenger and that it was his leniency that encouraged people to talk to him that way, thereby preparing the way for Marwān's role later during the siege.

The narrative continues to record the problems between ʿUthmān and Kufa in the form of exchanged letters. ʿUthmān had brought his governors, including Saʿīd, to Medina for consultation and upon Saʿīd's return he was barred from entering the city by al-Ashtar.[114] ʿUthmān wrote them a letter stating they were the first to start divisions in Islam and ordering them to fear God and return to the truth and the Book.[115] Al-Ashtar wrote a response letter to ʿUthmān addressed to "the afflicted and erring caliph who has diverged from the *sunnah* of his prophet and has cast behind his back the rule of the Qur'ān."[116] Al-Ashtar stated: "forbid yourself and your governors injustice, aggression, and the exiling of the righteous, then we shall grant you obedience... As to our affection [you can have it] if you retract, repent, ask God to forgive your injustice to the best among us, your exiling of our righteous ones, ousting us from our homes, and appointing youths over us."[117] ʿUthmān had the person who delivered the letters and his governor in Kufa whipped. But the narrative ends with ʿUthmān exclaiming: "By God I am repentant" and appointing a new governor of the people's choosing.[118] Al-Balādhurī presents a political paradigm in which the ruler makes mistakes, is confronted, and repents.

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[113] Al-Balādhurī was a member of Mutawakkil's court one wonders about the contemporaneous relationship between the caliph and the *ʿulamā'*. Apparently, al-Mutawakkil, unlike al-Ma'mūn, was not interested in asserting any religious role for himself. He was too busy building palaces and going on the hunt. Consequently, El-Hibri concludes, "In the post-mihna era the ʿulamā' had resolved on running religious affairs in isolation from the caliphate, whose role was reduced to providing a stamp of approval." *Reinterpreting*, 122. Al-Balādhurī's conceptualization of the struggle between religious and political authority might also be reflecting back on the conflicts during the reign of al-Ma'mūn. Ira Lapidus points out how Sahl ibn Salāma al-Anṣārī posed a threat to caliphal authority; he wore a copy of the Qur'ān around his neck and preached "that allegiance to the Qur'ān and *sunna* superseded obedience to authorities who were compromised by failure to uphold Islam." Lapidus, "The Separation of State and Religion in the Development of Early Islamic Society," *IJMES* 6 (1975): 372.

[114] Al-Balādhurī, 75.

[115] Significantly, al-Balādhurī does not include any of the actual details or Qur'anic verses that fill this letter in al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Shabbah's narratives.

[116] Al-Balādhurī, 77. This is slightly different in content and context from similar letters found in Ibn Shabbah's narrative. Ibn Shabbah's letter is from "the garrison towns" and is addressed simply to "the erring caliph." Ibn Shabbah, 193.

In Ibn Shabbah the tension between obedience to God and obedience to the ruler is first presented in a verbal confrontation between ʿUthmān and his detractors. ʿUthmān preached to the crowd from the *minbar* saying: "O people, listen and obey. For indeed listening obediently, there is no excuse against it, and listening rebelliously (*ʿāṣī*), there is no excuse for it."[119] The account continues, however, by pointing out that some of them called out to him: "Listening to you is what is rebellious." The tension presented by Ibn Shabbah between justice and rebellion and the legitimization of action is further developed by al-Ṭabarī. He too portrays the very integrity of the community as being at risk. His narrative of the al-Walīd affair differs markedly from that in al-Balādhurī.

Al-Ṭabarī

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[117] Al-Balādhurī, 77. The letter in Ibn Shabbah is similar, but rather than listing specific abuses, accuses ʿUthmān of rebellion (*mʿaṣiyyah*). Rather than referring to those who recite and follow the Qur'ān, it quotes the Qur'ān: "There is no obedience to one who rebels [against] God." The letter concludes: "Verily we were obedient to God by supporting and revering you, but then rejected that when we had learned you wanted to destroy us and destroy yourself. We must reject and disobey whoever keeps us from God. You are merely a mortal servant whereas God is the eternal Creator." Ibn Shabbah, 193. Ibn Shabbah raises the stakes from conflict with pious men to rebellion against God and from withheld obedience to active disobedience and rejection. Lapidus notes that in the struggle for authority in the early ninth century, Sahl ibn Salāma al-Anṣārī adopted the slogan: "No obedience to the creature in disobedience of the Creator." "The Separation of State and Religion," 373.

[118] Al-Balādhurī, 77.

[119] Ibn Shabbah, 188.

Just as al-Balādhurī uses the al-Walīd narrative to illustrate his main theme of defending political authority despite errors of judgment or religious rivals, al-Ṭabarī uses it to shift blame away from ʿUthmān to the divisions and disagreements among different groups in the provinces.[120] In the al-Wāqidī accounts recorded in al-Ṭabarī, ʿUthmān removed al-Walīd and appointed Saʿīd b. al-ʿĀṣ as governor when witnesses formally charged al-Walīd with drinking wine. ʿUthmān ordered Saʿīd to send al-Walīd to him, which he did, and ʿUthmān "decided to flog him and inflicted the penalty fixed by God (*al-ḥadd*)."[121] Rather than ʿUthmān's nepotism and failure to carry out the proper punishment, this al-Wāqidī account focuses on al-Walīd and the rebelliousness in Kufa. But even this comes much later in al-Ṭabarī's narrative; the majority of the information on al-Walīd is based on Sayf b. ʿUmar, who presents a very different image of ʿUthmān, al-Walīd, and the challenges facing the community.

According to Sayf, the events in Kufa were a result of Satan instigating evil amongst the people, while ʿUthmān and al-Walīd appear as model leaders.[122] ʿUthmān was forced to appoint al-Walīd because of problems in Kufa and "Once in Kufa, (al-Walīd) was the most beloved of men among the people and the most courteous in dealing with them. Matters continued thus for five years; there was no door on his residence."[123] Sayf's account depicts the accusations of drinking as false accusations from some men who held a personal grudge against al-Walīd. Rather than drinking with the Christian, Abū Zubayd, al-Walīd converted him to Islam.[124] Those who held a grudge against al-Walīd claimed he was drinking wine with Abū Zubayd, but when a group burst in upon them all they found was a plate of grape seeds and stems.[125] The account concludes: "Now al-Walīd forgave them for this, concealing it from ʿUthmān and taking no steps among the people in regard to it. He disliked arousing dissension among them, so he kept silent about it and bore it patiently."[126] The key point is that it is personal grievances that were motivating al-Walīd's accusers.[127] Even though ʿUthmān suspected this, he ordered al-Walīd whipped. He urged al-Walīd to suffer patiently, pointing out that if the testimony against him was false, his accusers would suffer for it in hell.[128] Al-Walīd's suffering for the greater good of the community foreshadows how Sayf portrays ʿUthmān's murder.

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[120] Contrary to the al-Wāqidī account in al-Balādhurī, al-Ṭabarī's al-Wāqidī account says, "ʿUthmān did not change the governors for one year as ʿUmar requested." After one year he appointed Saʿd b. Abī Waqqāṣ governor of Kufaa. Then he removed him and appointed al-Walīd. Al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 5.
[121] Ibid., 120.
[122] Ibid., 15.
[123] Ibid., 17. Furthermore, when ʿUthmān confirmed ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ as the governor of Egypt, Sayf tells us ʿUthmān "did not depose anyone save on the basis of a complaint [against him] or an [official's] desire to step down apart from any complaint." Ibid., 19.

The defense of al-Walīd and ʿUthmān, linked with an emphasis on the unity of the community, continues in another Sayf report. After ʿUthmān replaced al-Walīd with Saʿīd b. al-ʿĀṣ the Kufans were still not satisfied. Yazīd b. Qays tried to stir up the people to remove their governor, but "the far-sighted, the nobles, and the leading men among the people" do not join him.[129] While the people were "afflicted with a spirit of dissension," Saʿīd's representative urged them to "'Remember God's blessing upon you when you were enemies, and He brought you together so that by His blessing you became brothers. You were on the brink of a pit of fire, and He delivered you from it.'[130] Do not revert to an evil from which Almighty God has delivered you."[131] God's blessing upon them was to bring them together into a new, unified community. But unfortunately, as Saʿīd described the situation to ʿUthmān: "The affairs of the Kufans are in turmoil."[132] He attributes this to conflicts between old Bedouin noble families and more recent immigrants. Thus in Sayf's account the explanation for the growing resentment against ʿUthmān and his officials is personal grievances and complex historical forces brought about by the changing nature of the new Islamic empire.

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[124] "But al-Walīd kept after him, and by the end of his governorship, he converted to Islam. His conversion was sincere and, when he became a Muslim, al-Walīd invited him to enter [his entourage], as he was a Bedouin and a poet at the time." Al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 48-9.
[125] Ibid., 49.
[126] Ibid., 49. Sayf explains away the situation of the sorcerer in similar fashion. Ibid., 50-2.
[127] Ibid., 52.
[128] Ibid., 54.
[129] Ibid., 134.

Al-Ṭabarī's al-Wāqidī account goes on to tell of all the problems ʿUthmān's new governor (Saʿīd) encountered in Kufa, problems that again focus blame on dissatisfied factions rather than ʿUthmān or his governors. Whereas in al-Balādhurī the complaints appear justified, in al-Ṭabarī, blame falls on fractious groups and individuals in Kufa. Al-Ṭabarī's version of al-Wāqidī concludes:

> (The dissidents) began sitting in their meeting places (*majālis*) and houses, vilifying ʿUthmān and Saʿīd. The people assembled together around them until those who were frequenting them had become numerous. Saʿīd wrote to ʿUthmān informing him about all this, as follows: "There is a gang among the Kufans" – [here] he gives him ten names – "Who are inciting them and banding together to disgrace you and me and to impugn [the sincerity of] our religion. If their movement gets firmly established, I fear they will become numerous." Thus, ʿUthmān wrote to Saʿīd, [directing him] to send them in

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[130] Q 3:98-99.
[131] Al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 134.
[132] Ibid., 57-8.

> exile to Muʿāwiyah, who at that time held authority over Syria, and (Saʿīd) did so.[133]

Whereas in al-Balādhurī ʿUthmān appears legitimately challenged for failing to uphold religion, in the al-Wāqidī accounts in al-Ṭabarī, religion is threatened not by ʿUthmān, but disgruntled groups in the provinces. Al-Balādhurī and al-Ṭabarī's narratives also give different explanations for ʿUthmān sending certain Kufans (and later Basrans) into exile in Syria. This is presented as the final straw that brings delegates to ʿUthmān in complaint.

Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī was one of the "righteous ones" supposedly sent into exile by ʿUthmān. Al-Balādhurī and al-Ṭabarī recorded the confrontation between Abū Dharr and ʿUthmān. Abū Dharr was highly esteemed for his piety and asceticism and was, based on some accounts, sent into exile. According to al-Balādhurī's narrative Abū Dharr confronted ʿUthmān for giving exorbitant amounts of money to his friends and family, including Marwān b. al-Ḥākam. He quoted a Qurʾanic verse warning of the punishment that awaits those who hoard gold and silver.[134] ʿUthmān told him to stop and Abū Dharr defended his right to recite the Qurʾān. The narrative continues with a variety of accounts (by al-Wāqidī and others) some showing ʿUthmān frustrated, but refraining from punishing Abū Dharr, to others in which ʿUthmān sent Abū Dharr into exile and was reprimanded for punishing anyone who criticized him.[135]

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[133] Ibid., 121.

[134] Q 9:34.

[135] This criticism is quite clear in al-Balādhurī, who portrays ʿUthmān torturing, whipping, and beating anyone who criticizes him. It truly is suggestive of what one associates with later caliphal absolutism, rather than that of Medina, still emerging from a tribal leadership structure.

Al-Balādhurī concludes the narrative with an account I have not seen elsewhere in which a group asked Abū Dharr if he was going to raise a banner to rally men against ʿUthmān. Abū Dharr responded: "Even if Ibn ʿAffān crucified me on the tallest trunk, I would listen, obey, accept, and be patient, for whoever humiliates the ruler there is no repentance for him."[136] The account concludes by stating: "they were dissuaded."[137] Repeatedly, al-Balādhurī framed the different contentious aspects of the revolt in this way with an appeal to the Qurʾān (rather than justice) against ʿUthmān's abuses and errors, but concluded with an appeal to the prestige of the ruler – rather than the unity of the Community.[138] This account in many ways forms the conclusion of the complaints against ʿUthmān in al-Balādhurī; from this point the narrative moves on to the events that directly led to the revolt, siege, and murder.

In al-Ṭabarī's narrative of the Abū Dharr affair, he relies exclusively on accounts by Sayf b. ʿUmar.[139] In these Abū Dharr was provoked by Ibn Sabāʾ to confront Muʿāwiyah rather than ʿUthmān. Muʿāwiyah complained to ʿUthmān, but ʿUthmān did not punish him. Instead he said, "Abū Dharr, I must carry out my own obligations and take what is owed by the subjects (*raʿiyyah*), I cannot compel them to be ascetics; rather, I am required to summon them to heed God's commandments and to follow the path of moderation."[140] Abū Dharr then requested to be allowed to leave Medina for it had become too decadent for him. He withdrew into the desert, but ʿUthmān continued to provide for his material needs, had regular meetings with him, and honored him when he died. This is a typical Sayf account in which it is others, in this case Ibn Sabāʾ, who caused problems for their own reasons rather than any divisions among the Companions. Furthermore, ʿUthmān is portrayed as an ideal ruler, responding promptly and wisely to complaints in the provinces and trying to find a just solution. Moreover, he honored and sought the advice of Abū Dharr who became increasingly esteemed in the literature as an early ascetic and someone who resisted the growing decadence and corruption of the community.

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[136] Al-Balādhurī, 93.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Consider the contrast with al-Ṭabarī who relies on Sayf's version which presents an idealized image of ʿUthmān honoring and respecting Abū Dharr rather than sending him into exile.
[139] Al-Ṭabarī relies almost exclusively on Sayf accounts for all the exile narratives. These continue to emphasize the importance of unity. In a confrontation between Muʿāwiyah and the Kufan exiles, Muʿawiyah states: "If you desire salvation, adhere to your community [*jamāʿah*]." Al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 117-8. In one al-Wāqidī account he does use, Muʿāwiyah affirms that matters are decided by God and only He has the right to attack or take vengeance. Ibid., 124.

The growing dissatisfaction in the garrison towns came to a head in year thirty-four. Both al-Balādhurī and al-Ṭabarī record al-Wāqidī's account: "Some Companions of the Messenger of God wrote to one another complaining of ʿUthmān's way of life and his changing [the precedent of Muḥammad, Abū Bakr, and ʿUmar], and what the people suffered from his governors. They criticized him strongly and asked one another to come to Medina if they wanted jihād. Only three of the Companions of the Messenger of God defended ʿUthmān or denied the accusations against him."[141] However, whereas al-Balādhurī reinforces the legitimate grievances of the Companions in another account by Abū Mikhnaf,[142] al-Ṭabarī places this account after a lengthy one by Sayf in which the dissatisfaction in the provinces is based entirely on their fickleness despite ʿUthmān's ceaseless efforts to appease them. For example when the Kufans were still unhappy with their new governor, Saʿīd, and demanded Abū Mūsā instead, ʿUthmān agreed, stating, "By God, we shall create no excuse for anyone, nor will we leave them any proof [against us]. We shall endure patiently, as we have been commanded to do, until we attain what they desire."[143] Once again, Sayf's narrative frames every conflict and complaint in order to demonstrate that ʿUthmān fulfilled the criteria for both justice and unity; under his reign they were not in tension but in balance.

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[140] Ibid., 66.
[141] Al-Balādhurī, 97; al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 140-1.
[142] Al-Balādhurī, 96-7.

Significantly, the Sayf account continues by mentioning that later, during the *fitnah*, Abū Mūsā stood up in the mosque and said: "O people, be still. For I heard the Messenger of God say, 'He who departs [from the Community] when there is an imam over the people' – and by God he did not say a just imām – 'in order to shatter their staff and to break up their community, kill him whoever he may be.'"[144] But the Kufans still complained and ʿUthmān wrote to them:

> By God, I will surely expose my honor to your abuse, and wear out my patience, and use every effort to seek reconciliation with you. So do not fail to ask for whatever you desire, so long as it does not involve rebellion against God. Nor should you fail to demand relief from whatever you hate, so long as it does not involve rebellion against God. Thus I will comply with whatever you desire until you have no argument [*ḥujjah*] against me.[145]

Again we see Sayf presenting ʿUthmān as an idealized ruler, but also defending the unity of the Community regardless of the ruler. It is immediately after this statement that al-Ṭabarī placed the al-Wāqidī account mentioned above about the Companions gathering against ʿUthmān. The effectiveness of al-Ṭabarī's juxtaposition of Sayf and al-Wāqidī comes through in the confrontation between ʿUthmān and ʿAlī recorded at this point in the narrative.

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[143] Al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 135.
[144] Ibid., 140.
[145] Ibid.

The al-Wāqidī accounts in al-Ṭabarī and al-Balādhurī go on to say that the Companions approached ʿAlī with their complaints and asked him to confront ʿUthmān on their behalf. ʿAlī did so, first praising ʿUthmān's close kinship with Muḥammad and the first two caliphs and stating he had no greater wisdom than ʿUthmān. ʿAlī then urged ʿUthmān to keep a tighter reign on Muʿāwiyah.[146] However, the al-Wāqidī account in al-Ṭabarī continues. Located just a few paragraphs after the Sayf account of Abū Mūsā's exhortation to obedience and unity, this account records ʿAlī warning ʿUthmān of the consequences of injustice. ʿAlī said:

> Know, ʿUthmān, that the best of God's servants in His eyes is a just imam, one who has been guided aright and who himself gives right guidance... The worst of men in God's sight is a tyrannical imam, one who has gone astray himself and by whom others are led astray... Verily, I heard the Messenger of God say, "The Day of Resurrection will be brought by the tyrannical imam; he will have no helper and no advocate, so that he will be cast into Hell..." ʿAlī continues, "I tell you beware of God and His sudden assault and His vengeance, for His punishment is harsh and painful indeed. I tell you beware lest you be the murdered imām of this Community.[147]

In this account not only are ʿUthman's actions defined as tyrannical, but his murder is an act of judgment by God rather than the rebels. Al-Ṭabarī's juxtaposition of Sayf and al-Wāqidī's appeals to unity and justice mark the end of year thirty-four in al-

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[146] Al-Balādhurī, 97-8.
[147] Ibid., 142.

Ṭabarī.[148] Year thirty-five (655-656 C.E.) was the year of the siege and murder of ʿUthmān.

The Siege

There were two sieges of ʿUthmān. The first took place when delegations from the three garrison towns, Fustat, Basra, and Kufa, met in Medina to confront ʿUthmān. ʿUthmān defended his actions, repented, promised to change, and sent them on their way. The Egyptian delegation, however, on the road home came upon a rider whom they stopped. They searched him and found hidden in a water bag a message to the governor of Egypt, supposedly from ʿUthmān.[149] The letter ordered the governor to kill the leaders of the dissident band upon their arrival in Egypt.[150] Not surprisingly, they returned to Medina, as did the Kufans and Basrans, confronted ʿUthmān, and laid siege to him a second time. This siege only ended with ʿUthmān's murder.

Almost every detail of this brief summary is contested within the narratives. What was the make up and the motivation of the first band from the provinces? Did ʿUthmān write the letter? Did he know about it? If so what are the consequences? How did the Kufans and Basrans find out about the letter and know to return as well? How did ʿUthmān behave? Is he responsible for the deteriorating situation? If not, then who is? How did the Companions respond? What was ʿAlī's role in the whole affair? How narrators answered these questions is the key to what they felt to be the causes and consequences of the revolt.

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[148] The al-Wāqidī account in al-Ṭabarī and al-Balādhurī concludes in the same way with ʿUthmān defending himself from the *minbar*. He points out the reasons for any changes he may have made and that they would not have complained to ʿUmar about the same things. They are taking advantage of him being gracious to them and deferring to their demands.

[149] Some accounts say "lead pipe." One of the points of detail is what exactly did the messenger say and how hidden was the message. These could be developed to heighten a sense of deception and treachery.

[150] Accounts very in the amount of detail they give regarding the content of the letter regarding what exactly was to be done and to whom.

In the siege narrative we find a continuation of many of the earlier themes. Ibn Saʿd presented an extremely terse and matter-of-fact narrative of the siege, but one in which he defended ʿUthmān's right to the caliphate and ʿAlī's support of his caliphate. Similarly, al-Balādhurī continued to emphasize the need to repent and follow good counsel. ʿAlī remains the symbol of good counsel while still supporting ʿUthmān. al-Balādhurī, however, dropped the critical tone that dominated his earlier narrative. Whereas ʿUthmān may have done things deserving of rebuke and repentance, he did nothing deserving of rebellion or death. In this way, al-Balādhurī continued to defend the legitimacy and authority of caliphs generally. In direct contrast, it is in the siege narratives that al-Ṭabarī portrayed ʿUthmān repeatedly breaking his promises to the people and behaving unjustly.[151] Moreover, it was injustice severe enough to warrant his removal. ʿAlī defended ʿUthmān's caliphate only up to a point. Once again, al-Ṭabarī counter-balanced these arguments with Sayf's accounts that portray ʿUthmān as the ideal ruler, and blame the siege on divisions and heresies in the provinces, suggesting that injustice stems from disunity rather than the other way around.

Ibn Saʿd/ Al-Wāqidī

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[151] This is very similar to the framework of Ibn Shabbah's narrative.

In Ibn Saᶜd's section "Those from the garrison town besiege ᶜUthmān,"[152] he presents a very brief account of events that does little to condemn ᶜUthmān or elevate ᶜAlī. His al-Wāqidī accounts tell his readers that the people from the garrison towns "want" ᶜUthmān without any reference to what their grievances may have been.[153] Groups from the garrison towns gathered in Medina and ᶜUthmān sent out Muḥammad b. Maslamah to tell them ᶜUthmān would do what they wanted. The band departed apparently satisfied. The Egyptian band then found a letter that said, "Do such-and-such to so-and-so." The Egyptians returned, "claiming that ᶜUthmān had done things which he swore he had not," and besieged ᶜUthmān again. The account is extremely brief and vague, typical for Ibn Saᶜd. This is the extent of al-Wāqidī agreement between the three narratives. Al-Balādhurī and al-Ṭabarī's narratives give additional accounts from al-Wāqidī and others that provide the details and interpretive framework for the sieges.[154]

The al-Wāqidī accounts in al-Balādhurī and al-Ṭabarī develop the situation more in terms of growing dissension in the provinces and ᶜAlī's role in defusing the situation. These al-Wāqidī accounts build on ᶜUthmān's earlier abuses, but also show Muḥammad b. Abī Ḥudhayfa and Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr instigating the Egyptians against ᶜUthmān.[155] When they approached Medina claiming to come on pilgrimage,

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[152] Ibn Saᶜd, 44.

[153] Ibn Khayyāṭ provides an account from Abū al-Ḥasan that states groups from Egypt, Kufa, and Basra came to Medina "in the matter of ᶜUthmān." Ibn Khayyāṭ, 145.

[154] At the beginning of his al-Wāqidī account, however, al-Ṭabarī states he does not include all the reasons mentioned by al-Wāqidī because he finds them offensive. Al-Ṭabarī *Crisis*, 170. Several scholars have pointed to this as highlighting the difficulty of determining what chroniclers choose to include and why.

[155] Al-Balādhurī, 99; al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 172.

ʿUthmān noted it was because they really wanted *fitnah*.[156] It is not clear whether *fitnah* originates with injustice or disunity. ʿUthmān sent out Muḥammad b. Maslamah and ʿAlī.[157] ʿAlī continued to defend ʿUthmān as well as urge him to repent and make an agreement with the besiegers to respond to their grievances.[158] ʿUthmān did make a moving repentance speech and the people had pity on him. But then ʿUthmān listened to Marwān who criticized him for repenting while in a position of weakness. Marwān increasingly plays the role of villain, working to deceive ʿUthmān. However, al-Balādhurī developed Marwān's role as a defense for ʿUthmān and an antagonist for ʿAlī. Al-Ṭabarī, on the other hand, highlighted ʿUthmān's weak leadership and willing cooperation with Marwān against the people.

Al-Balādhurī

Al-Balādhurī strengthens the image of rivalry between ʿAlī and Marwān by repeating many of the same points made by al-Wāqidī through additional accounts by Abū Mikhnaf and al-Zuhrī.[159] These accounts further the argument in four key ways. First they further highlight ʿAlī's role as ʿUthmān's defender and arbiter with the people.[160] Second, they explain why ʿUthmān did not listen to or rely on ʿAlī. Marwān had turned ʿUthmān against him. According to an account from al-Zuhrī,

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[156] Ibid.

[157] Al-Balādhurī, 100; al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 172. While Ibn Saʿd only mentions Muḥammad, al-Balādhurī and al-Ṭabarī's al-Wāqidī accounts mention both. Others have noted this addition of ʿAlī as evidence of growing pro-ʿAlid feeling. It is not clear whether Ibn Saʿd is suppressing the reference to ʿAlī or al-Balādhurī and al-Ṭabarī are adding it. Moreover, whereas al-Balādhurī portrays ʿAlī as the only one in the community who is respected enough to act as mediator between ʿUthmān and his besiegers, al-Ṭabarī shows ʿAlī and Muḥammad both playing key roles. Ibn Khayyāṭ reports that ʿUthmān sent out ʿAlī and two others and that ʿAlī urged the besiegers "to be slow in all that annoys you." Ibn Khayyāṭ, 147.

[158] And Muḥammad b. Maslamah in al-Ṭabarī.

[159] Considering the strategy of placement, al-Balādhurī begins his narrative of the siege with an account by Abū Mikhnaf which shows the people of the garrison cities (not Companions or religious leaders) agreeing to gather in Medina and confront ʿUthmān with a list of grievances. Notably, they also agreed to "reproach him [ʿUthmān] and he should either repent or they would consider what to do with him." (96-7) Again we see the theme of confrontation and repentance, with no reference yet to force or violence. In response to this reproach, ʿUthmān defended his actions and repented.

> The people used to come to ʿAlī because of his early [acceptance of] Islam, his kinship [with the Prophet] and his virtue, and not because he wanted them to. Marwān used to come to ʿUthmān and inform him that he [ʿAlī] was instigating the people against him and was connected with all matters coming from the people of Egypt and others.[161]

It is perhaps due to Marwān's influence that when ʿUthmān heard of the letter to the Egyptian governor, he blamed ʿAlī, and ʿAlī stormed away in anger.[162] ʿAlī's virtue is contrasted with Marwān's scheming. Third, this explains away as mere rumor the idea that ʿAlī was plotting against ʿUthmān. Finally, they present Marwān as responsible for the letter: it was Marwān's servant, his handwriting, and he had ʿUthmān's ring.[163]

It is possible also that the incident of the letter could be used to debate the character of the besiegers and the appropriate response to such critics. For example, according to Abū Mikhnaf the letter stated: "If Abū ʿAmr b. Budayl comes to you, strike off his head. Cut off the hands of Ibn ʿUdays, Kinānah and ʿUrwā; let them soak in their blood until they die, then tie them to the trunks of palm trees."[164] On the one hand this portrays ʿUthmān as a treacherous tyrant. But, by ordering the prescribed punishment for bandits and highway robbers, the account could be making another statement, namely that the besiegers were merely bandits rather than rebels with legitimate grievances. Or conversely, that they were rebels with legitimate grievances and ʿUthmān erred by treating them as bandits.[165]

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[160] With ʿAlī serving as guarantor, ʿUthmān signed a covenant with the dissidents. It reads as follows: "In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate, this is a letter from ʿAbdallāh ʿUthmān, Prince of the Believers to whoever reproached him of the Believers and the Muslims. To you I promise to abide by the Book of God and the sunna of His Prophet, to give to the needy, to secure the frightened, to return the exiled, not to keep the army stationed too long at the frontiers and to distribute the booty [to all]. ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib is the guarantor to the Believers and the Muslims of ʿUthmān's fulfillment of what is in this missive." (103-4).

[161] Al-Balādhurī, 100.

[162] Ibn Shabbah's narrative first blames ʿAlī for the letter and only then Marwān. First we are told simply that they found the letter and returned to Medina wanting to kill ʿUthmān. Then the *shīʿah* of ʿAlī said it [the letter] was the work of ʿUthmān and the *shīʿah* of ʿUthmān said it was the work of ʿAlī and his companions." Ibn Shabbah, 209. The Banū Umayyah blamed ʿAlī for stirring up the people against them. Then ʿUthmān blamed ʿAlī, not because Marwān deceived him, but because ʿAlī went out to the first band and now they had returned so his behavior was suspicious. After this Ibn Shabbah includes the accounts that also cast blame on Marwān for the letter. Ibn Shabbah 209-212.

[163] Al-Balādhurī, 106, 108; Ibn Shabbah, 214.

Al-Ṭabarī

In al-Ṭabarī the details of the first siege and letter are presented by Sayf b. ʿUmar and al-Wāqidī. Al-Wāqidī's narrative emphasizes the importance of unity, but also that it is conditional on the behavior of the caliph. The tension is first presented in a speech by Muḥammad b. Maslamah to the first group of besiegers.[166] He reminded them of ʿUthmān's rights based on their oath of allegiance. He also "filled them with dread of civil war (*fitnah*), and informed them that (ʿUthmān's) murder was a grave matter" that would "open the gates of discord."[167] He promised ʿUthmān would change and stated if he did not then the matter was up to them.[168] This dialogue asserts both the caliph's right to obedience and the danger of *fitnah*, while also undermining both of these if ʿUthmān does not uphold justice. When the Egyptians returned with the letter the matter was decided.[169] Muḥammad b. Maslamah refused to defend ʿUthmān any further. Moreover, when he asked the band how they knew ʿUthmān wrote it, they responded: "Suppose Marwān has done this without ʿUthmān's knowledge. That would be worse, and he must remove himself from office."[170] This stands in marked contrast to the accounts in al-Balādhurī which use Marwān as a way of shifting guilt away from ʿUthmān. They also argue that obedience is conditional.

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[164] Al-Balādhurī places this version of the letter first in his narrative, and only then gives accounts by al-Wāqidī and others that make only vague references to the actual content of the letter. It is identical to the version of the letter found in IbnAʿtham. Both Abū Mikhnaf and Ibn Aʿtham were from Kufa.

[165] See Abou El Fadl's discussion of the distinction in the Introduction. Ibn Khayyaṭ also states the letter ordered the cutting off of hands and feet and crucifixion. But his version does not provide any names. Ibn Khayyaṭ, 146.

[166] Apparently, according to al-Wāqidī, these are men who had agreed the year before to gather and confront ʿUthmān. Al-Ṭabarī also includes a more damning version based on Ibn Isḥāq. In this account it is the Companions who are gathered against ʿUthmān in order to defend Islam. "When the people saw what ʿUthmān was doing, the Companions of the Prophet in Medina wrote to the Companions who were scattered throughout the frontier provinces: 'You have gone forth but to struggle in the path of Almighty God, for the sake of Muḥammad's religion. In your absence the religion of Muḥammad has been corrupted and forsaken. Come then and reestablish Muḥammad's religion.' Thus they came from every direction until they killed (ʿUthmān)." Al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 184.

[167] Ibid., 191.

Al-Ṭabarī uses accounts by Sayf b. ʿUmar as a means of defending ʿUthmān and the Companions. Sayf blames the first siege on the rise and spread of the Sabāʾiyyah heresy led by ʿAbdallāh b. Sabāʾ, a converted Jew who preached a message of Muḥammad's return and claimed ʿUthmān had stolen the caliphate from ʿAlī.[171] He and his message were rejected, however, and he was repeatedly kicked out of one region after another until he finally arrived in Egypt where he gathered a following of supporters. It was these supporters who actually approached Medina to confront ʿUthmān.[172] When ʿUthmān sent out messengers to see what they wanted, they confessed they had come as a part of a pre-meditated scheme to undermine ʿUthmān's caliphate.[173] Sayf's account also shows the infamous letter to the Egyptian governor as a part of the Sabāʾiyyah plot.[174] Through the Sabāʾiyyah conspiracy Sayf defends ʿUthmān as well as the unity and virtue of the Companions. Many have concluded that Ibn Sabāʾ is too convenient to be true, especially since no other early sources mention him.[175] Our concern, however, is not with the reliability of Sayf's narrative, but al-Ṭabarī's use of it.

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[168] In this account Muḥammad b. Maslamah is the guarantor rather than ʿAlī and the people are satisfied with this.

[169] This account of the letter orders the Egyptian governor to shave the men's heads and beards, give them a hundred lashes, and imprison them. Al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 192. Since the al-Wāqidī accounts in Ibn Saʿd and al-Balādhurī simply state, "do such and such to so and so" was al-Ṭabarī filling in what he felt was the appropriate punishment? And if so, the appropriate punishment for what: rebellion or banditry?

[170] Al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 192.

[171] Earlier Sayf accounts portray him traveling throughout the provinces stirring up dissension and trying to gather followers, often through promises of money. Recall he was the one who instigated the conflict between Abū Dharr and Muʿāwiyah.

Not only did al-Ṭabarī use the Sayf account to defend ʿUthmān and the Companions, but also the principle of the unity of the community and the right to use force against those who threaten it. The account continues with people urging ʿUthmān to kill this group of dissidents. They pointed out: "Verily the Messenger of God said, 'God's curse is on any man who has summoned [others] to join him or anyone else while there is an imam over the people, so put him to death'."[176] But ʿUthmān refused, saying, "Nay, but we do our utmost to pardon and accept and enlighten them, and we oppose no one until he violates a divine commandment

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[172] Tabai, *Crisis*, 160. Sayf describes how the groups from the different garrison towns each desired someone else to be caliph.

[173] Ibid., 155. They said: "We want to mention to (ʿUthmān) certain misdeeds that we have planted in the hearts of the people. Afterwards we shall go back to them and claim that we compelled him to confess these things, but that he did not abandon them or repent. Then we will set out in the guise of pilgrims until we reach [Medina]. We will surround him and depose him, and if he refuses we will kill him."

[174] Ibid., 162. Moreover, it is ʿAlī who exposed it, by pointing out the Kufans and Basrans could not have known to return to Medina as well unless they had all planned it before they left Medina. In the account the Egyptians told ʿAlī the letter ordered them to be killed.

[175] Ella Landau-Tasseron has questioned this conclusion. "Sayf ibn ʿUmar," 19.

[176] Al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 155. One is tempted to insert Abū Mūsā's addition cited by Sayf earlier: "Verily he did not say 'a just imam'." They also quote ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb who said, "I permit you only to kill (such a man), and I am your partner [in that deed]."

(*ḥadd*) or manifests unbelief."[177] In contrast to ʿUthmān's efforts to maintain unity and not bring bloodshed into the community, the rebels continued to conspire against him.[178]

Ibn Saʿd

The incident of the letter often forms the turning point in the narratives; the accusations and defenses that arise during the second siege raise larger issues about effective government and political legitimacy. Ibn Saʿd defends ʿUthmān, his caliphate, and ʿAlī's innocence in a section entitled, "what was said to ʿUthmān and what he said to them."[179] These accounts in many ways form the basis or canon of ʿUthmān's defense found in most narratives. Many of the same accounts appear in al-Balādhurī and with slight variation in al-Ṭabarī. First we are told that ʿUthmān could not on principle step down and avoid death because it would be abandoning the "cloak of authority" placed upon him by God.[180] Once Ibn Saʿd has explained why ʿUthmān did not step down, he moves on to why he did not defend himself. He cites the *ḥadīth* in which Muḥammad predicted ʿUthmān would have a violent end and urged him to endure it patiently. Thus when others urged ʿUthmān to defend himself, he refused saying he had promised Muḥammad he would endure.[181] Nevertheless, ʿUthmān understandably tried to ward off this conclusion by reminding his besiegers that it is only lawful to kill a Muslim for one of three reasons: apostasy, adultery, and murder. Ibn Saʿd gives three variants of this, one of which adds that he who spreads mischief in the land can also be killed with impunity.[182] He also repeats three times ʿUthmān's warning that if they kill him the community would never pray or fight [a common enemy] together again.[183] For similar reasons, ʿUthmān ordered his supporters not to fight in his defense, pointing out that to kill one person is to kill all.[184] Moreover we are told that ʿAlī declared himself innocent of ʿUthmān's blood and even tried to come to ʿUthmān's aid, but was prevented by his family.[185]

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[177] Ibid. ʿUthmān goes on to defend himself on all the points that are held against him.

[178] He continues: "When affairs come to their conclusion and evil had been betrayed by its own partisans, then malevolence and selfish desires appeared, though no crime or wrongful violence had been committed [by me], but only the carrying out of the Book of God. Lacking any valid proof or excuse, (the malcontents) have in reality sought one goal while publicly proclaiming another." Ibid., 163.

[179] This section consists of virtually no accounts by al-Wāqidī, a unique feature in his narrative of ʿUthmān.

[180] In Ibn Saʿd, 45; al-Balādhurī, 12; and Ibn Khayyāṭ, 148. As ʿUthmān's death seemed imminent, he asked Ibn ʿUmar what he should do. Ibn ʿUmar asked him if he thought the band would really kill him and when ʿUthmān said he thought not, Ibn ʿUmar then said he should not step down because it would introduce an evil precedent into the community of people trying to depose a ruler anytime they did not approve of something. This argument is even more forceful since it is articulated by Ibn ʿUmar. Although al-Ṭabarī has ʿUthmān declare on numerous occasions he cannot remove a shirt of authority, he does not include this particular account about setting a bad precedent. Perhaps he did not think it was one.

Al-Balādhurī

Al-Balādhurī includes accounts by Abū Mikhnaf and al-Zuhrī that further defend ʿUthmān and ʿAlī. ʿUthmān urged them to choose their own governors and turns over to them the keys to the treasury; they leave satisfied.[186] The challenges facing the community are specific and easily fixable. Only if ʿUthmān himself wrote the letter would it have justified his removal. But they did not think he did and instead demanded that he turn over Marwān.[187] It is only word of approaching reinforcements that provoked the besiegers to take action against ʿUthmān.[188] Having defended ʿUthmān, his caliphate, and the community, al-Balādhurī turned his attention to ʿAlī. The Banū Umayyah blamed ʿAlī for instigating the people against them and he insisted he had done all he could to defend ʿUthmān and he was innocent of ʿUthmān's blood.[189] Despite the innocence of ʿUthmān and ʿAlī, al-Balādhurī complicates the picture by concluding the section with an account by al-Madāʾinī that I have not seen elsewhere. It describes news of ʿUthmān's assassination reaching Muʿāwiyah's general while he was still on the way to rescue ʿUthmān. He declared, "If I had entered Medina while ʿUthmān was alive, I would not have left an adult alive because the one who abandons [another] and the murderer are alike."[190] As in the *shūrā* accounts, al-Balādhurī concludes this section with an account that taints ʿAlī's claims and reemphasizes the importance of loyalty to the caliph.

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[181] Ibn Saʿd, 46; al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 200, 218; al-Balādhurī included this *ḥadīth* earlier in his section on ʿUthmān's conduct.

[182] Ibn Saʿd, 46; al-Balādhurī, 120. Al-Ṭabarī does not include this particular version. This is not surprising considering al-Ṭabarī makes the strongest case for the legitimacy of rebellion against an unjust ruler.

[183] Ibn Saʿd, 46-47, 50; al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 222.

[184] Ibn Saʿd, 48; al-Balādhurī, 116.

[185] Ibn Saʿd, 47; al-Balādhurī, 145.

[186] Al-Balādhurī, 107, transmitted by Abū Mikhnaf. The besiegers replied: "We have accused you of the letter, but now we withdraw [our charge]."

Al-Ṭabarī

In direct contrast to the confrontations in al-Balādhurī, al-Ṭabarī relies on al-Wāqidī accounts that accuse ʿUthmān of permitting injustice and therefore forfeiting his right to the caliphate. ʿUthmān repeatedly denied any knowledge of the letter and refused to remove the shirt of authority placed on him by God. They insisted, however, God had already removed it if these things could have happened without his knowledge.[191] The second time ʿUthmān denied any knowledge of the letter, they concluded he was either a liar or a weak ruler and in either case he deserved to be deposed.[192] ʿUthmān responded this time, "The imām both errs and acts rightly. I shall not have myself chastised, because if I accept retaliation for everyone against whom I have acted in error, I would be destroyed."[193] However, when they confronted him with a list of abuses, ʿUthmān offered to repent and desist from the behavior they hated. The besiegers this time pointed out that it was too late and they had no reason to believe him after he had repented in the past and then continued with the same behavior.[194] They told him he had no choice but to fight. ʿUthmān was responsible for his own death.[195]

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[187] Ibid., 109-110, transmitted by al-Zuhrī.
[188] Ibid., 115, transmitted by Abū Mikhnaf.
[189] Ibid., 106-7.
[190] Ibid., 115. Compare this with an account by al-Kalbī in al-Ṭabarī in which ʿUthmān wrote to Muʿāwiyah to send reinforcements claiming the "Medinese have become unbelievers, abandoned obedience, and renounced their oath of allegiance." Muʿāwiyah however delayed, "for he did not wish to differ openly with the Companions of the Messenger of God, since he knew that they concurred [on this matter]." Al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 185.

Whereas al-Balādhurī relies on accounts by al-Zuhrī and Abū Mikhnaf to shift the focus away from ʿUthmān to the conflict between ʿAli and Marwān, al-Ṭabarī relies on accounts by Ibn Isḥāq that further blame ʿUthmān along with Marwān.[196] Nor does Ibn Isḥāq try to defend ʿAlī's refusal to help ʿUthmān; ʿUthmān's behavior is indefensible. ʿUthmān feared he would be killed and sought counsel from his advisers and family members who told him to send for ʿAli. ʿUthmān hesitated because he knew this time he would have to keep his promises. Marwān, however, told him simply to use negotiations with ʿAlī as a stalling tactic.[197] ʿAlī pointed out to ʿUthmān that the people wanted justice more than his death and ʿUthmān asked for three days to address their grievances. ʿAlī negotiated and ʿUthmān signed a covenant to this effect.

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[191] Al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 194.

[192] Ibid., 195.

[193] Al-Ṭabarī reiterates this point by giving a variant account of this altercation transmitted by Ibn Isḥāq. After the discovery of the letter, the band said, "'We will not act precipitously even though we suspect you. Remove from us your sinful governors and appoint others over us who are not accused [of taking] our lives and property. Respond to our grievances.' ʿUthmān said, 'How do I look if I name officials whom you desire and remove those hateful to you? Authority (*al-amr*) would then belong to you.' They said, 'By God, you must either do [what you promised], abdicate, or be killed. See to things yourself or leave [them to us].' But he refused, saying, 'I am not one to remove a robe that God has placed upon me.' So they besieged him for forty nights." Ibid., 189.

[194] Ibid., 196. This is quite different from al-Balādhurī. Al-Wāqidī then gives what will increasingly become ʿUthmān's last defense, his refusal to defend himself because he did not want to be the one who introduced bloodshed into Muḥammad's community.

[195] ʿAlī told ʿUthmān, "You have destroyed your own honor and you have been robbed of your authority (*amr*)." Ibid., 178.

[196] Marwān "worked ceaselessly to delude him." Ibid., 179.

> Thus the people turned back from (ʿUthmān) and withdrew until he should fulfill the promises that he had freely given them. But (ʿUthmān) began preparing for war and gathering arms. . . When the three days had passed and he had done nothing to alter anything which was hateful to the people or remove any governor, they revolted against him.[198]

This account emphasizes the covenant nature of the agreement and ʿUthmān's intentional duplicity. As for ʿAlī, he removed himself from the whole affair.

Al-Ṭabarī concludes his section on the siege with an account by Ibn ʿAwf in which ʿUthmān finally repented and word of it was taken to ʿAlī. But before ʿAlī could do anything, word reached him of ʿUthmān's death, to which he responded, "What good is ʿUthmān's repentance now."[199] The reader is told the community was plunged into evil from that day on.[200] This marks the transition to al-Ṭabarī's treatment of the murder.

The Murder

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[197] Al-Ṭabarī, 187. Marwān puts forward the argument: "They rebelled against you so they have no binding commitment [from you]."
[198] Ibid., 188-189.
[199] Al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 198.
[200] Ibid.

All three of our sources use al-Wāqidī's quite brief description of the murder. Ibn Saʿd, however, surrounds it with non-Wāqidī sources that defend ʿUthmān and the caliphate, while ʿAlī is virtually absent from the narrative. In contrast, al-Balādhurī provides numerous additional accounts that both criticize and defend ʿUthmān. al-Balādhurī abandons ʿUthmān to his fate and turns his attention to disentangling ʿAlī from the disintegrating community. Al-Ṭabarī again relies on al-Wāqidī as well as Sayf to give two different versions of the murder. In contrast to al-Wāqidī's brief account, Sayf's emphasizes ʿUthmān's piety and the attackers' greed and aggression. Whereas Ibn Saʿd concludes with a defense of ʿUthmān's piety and al-Balādhurī carefully promotes ʿAlī's innocence, al-Ṭabarī uses al-Wāqidī and Sayf to once again debate the competing appeals to unity and justice.

The key questions in the murder narrative are: Who initiated violence and why? Who did or did not defend ʿUthmān and why? What did ʿUthmān do? What did ʿAlī do?[201] The al-Wāqidī account that appears in our three sources answers these questions only in part. According to al-Wāqidī, when the besiegers were pushed into action by ʿUthmān's approaching reinforcements,[202] Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr and three companions scaled the walls into ʿUthmān's house.[203] The narrative continues:

> They found ʿUthmān, with his wife Nāʾilah, reading the Sūrah of the Cow from the Quran. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr came up to them and seized ʿUthmān's beard. "May God disgrace you, you hyena [*naʿthal*]," he said. ʿUthmān replied, "I am no hyena. I am God's servant and the Commander of

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[201] El-Hibri shows how the corresponding specific details of the murder of the Caliph al-Amīn (d. 198/813) form "the crux of a muted controversy in the sources." El-Hibri, *Reinterpreting*, 66.

[202] Ibn Saʿd, 50; al-Balādhurī, 150; al-Ṭabarī *Crisis*, 220. Ibn Saʿd and al-Balādhurī point out that the Companions did not defend ʿUthmān because they did not think things would go so far.

[203] Ibn Saʿd, 51; al-Balādhurī, 130; al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 219. His companions are identified as Kinānah b. Bishr b. ʿAttāb, Sūdan b. Ḥumrān, and ʿAmr b. al-Hamiq.

> the Faithful." Muḥammad said, "Neither Muʿāwiyah nor anyone else has been of any use to you."[204] ʿUthmān said, "Son of my brother, let go of my beard. Your father would not have gripped it like this." Muḥammad replied, "Had my father seen you doing these things, he would have denounced you for them,[205] and I mean to do worse to you than grab your beard." ʿUthmān said, "I seek God's help and support against you." Then (Muḥammad) pierced his forehead with a broad iron-tipped arrow that he was holding. Kinanah b. Bishr raised some arrows of the same kind that he was holding, and plunged them from the base of ʿUthmān's ear down his throat.[206] Then he fell on him with his sword until he killed him.[207]

Although graphic and gruesome, this account fails to adequately address many of our main questions. The authors used other accounts which provide the interpretive key for how they understood this crisis in the community.

Ibn Saʿd

Ibn Saʿd concludes al-Wāqidī's account of the murder with accounts that further emphasize ʿUthmān's piety, the attackers' greed, and the consequences for the community. For example, the attackers plundering ʿUthmān's house are condemned by ʿUthmān's wife, Nāʾilah, who rebuked them and reminded them that they had killed a man who was fasting, praying, and reading the Qurʾān.[208] ʿUthmān's personal piety is further highlighted with three accounts of ʿUthmān having a dream in which Muḥammad appeared to him and told him he would breakfast with him that day in

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[204] Al-Balādhurī's version of the altercation is slightly different. See below.

[205] Ibn Saʿd does not include Muʿāwiyah's response regarding his father.

[206] Ibn Saʿd, 51; al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 219.

[207] Ibid. Al-Balādhurī's account says it was Sūdan b. Ḥumran who struck ʿUthmān with his sword. And only after ʿUthmān cried out: "Worshippers of God, do not kill me for you will repent and differ among yourselves!" Al-Balādhurī, 130. Al-Ṭabarī does not include the following detail: "ʿUthmān's blood flowed onto the pages of the open Qurʾān that was in his hands and dripped on the verse: 'God will suffice for you against them. He is the Hearer and the Knower.'" Q 2:137. Ibn Saʿd, 50-1; al-Balādhurī, 130-1. Although it is mentioned in his Sayf account.

[208] Ibn Saʿd 51. This account is from al-Wāqidī and also appears in al-Balādhurī, 152-3.

Paradise.[209] Ibn Saᶜd also includes a distinct section entitled "ᶜUthmān reading the Qurʾān on his knees," which includes six accounts of this pietistic description of ᶜUthmān when he was murdered. Not only was the revolt and murder a disaster because ᶜUthmān was an innocent man, but because of their larger consequences for the community. Ibn Saᶜd emphasizes these in a section entitled "mention of what the Companions of the messenger of God said."[210] In it ᶜUthmān's death is described as a permanent rupture or tear in Islam. It was also an event which had stripped the caliphate away from Muḥammad's community so that leadership became no more than secular kingship.[211] Not only the government of the community, but the life of the community, as well would suffer. Ibn Saᶜd includes an account warning that if a community kills its prophet the blood of 70,000 will be shed, and if its caliph then 35,000.[212] According to Ibn Saᶜd's narrative, in addition to divisions and kingship, ᶜUthmān's murder introduced inter-Muslim violence.

Al-Balādhurī

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[209] Ibid., 52.

[210] Ibid., 55.

[211] Ibn Saᶜd also includes three variations of the account stating ᶜUthmān will be the judge over his killers on the Day of Judgment. He includes ᶜAlī's response to the news of the murder in which e naturally denied having anything to do with it and swore he was innocent of ᶜUthmān's blood. Another account states that if killing ᶜUthmān was good, it would reap milk, if bad than blood. Ibn Saᶜd, 58.

[212] Ibn Saᶜd and Ibn Khayyāṭ conclude with a virtual footnote reiterating that it was not Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr or any of the Companions who killed ᶜUthmān. Ibn Saᶜd says it was "a black Egyptian" (Ibid.) and Ibn Khayyāṭ says: "no one from the *muhājirūn* or *anṣār* killed ᶜUthmān, but Egyptian rabble." (155) In these two narratives ᶜUthmān and the Companions are defended and ᶜAlī supports both ᶜUthmān and the *shūrā*'s choice. Al-Balādhurī and al-Ṭabarī also include accounts that exonerate Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr.

Al-Balādhurī includes the same al-Wāqidī account of the murder and the same series of "canonical" defenses of ʿUthmān's caliphate,[213] but he also works to reconcile ʿAlī's right to be ʿUthmān's successor then and the ʿAbbāsids' right to be his successor now. In his version of al-Wāqidī's account of the murder, when Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr burst in ʿUthmān, ʿUthmān put the Qur'ān on his lap and promised to abide by what was in it and repented of all they hated. Ibn Abī Bakr replied, however, "What! Now! When hitherto you have been obdurate and among the mischief makers?"[214] This portrayal of ʿUthmān does not emphasize that he was fasting and praying and even shows him picking up the Qur'ān in self-defense rather reading the Qur'ān when the murderers burst in.[215] Not only does al-Balādhurī do little to defend ʿUthmān personally, he also includes accounts which remind the reader that ʿUthmān showed improper favoritism towards his family, abandoned the *sunnah*, and misused the public treasury.[216]

According to al-Balādhurī although some Companions defended ʿUthmān, others, especially Ṭalḥah and ʿĀ'ishah instigated the revolt against him.[217] Al-

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[213] His mention of the 35,000 killed does not include the mention of 70,000 for the death of a Prophet. Al-Balādhurī, 119. He also includes a variant version in which the 35,000 are killed by the unsheathed sword of God. Ibid., 140.

[214] Ibid., 130. Q 10:92. This also turns ʿUthmān's own words against him that mischief makers make up a fourth group that could be killed with impunity.

[215] As mentioned above the account does note, however, that ʿUthmān's blood dripped on the verse: "God will suffice you against them. He is the Hearer, and the Knower." Q 2:137. Ibid. The only other reference to ʿUthmān with the Qur'ān also states, "He [ʿUthmān] performed ablution, then took the *maṣḥaf* and sought protection with it from the transgressors." Ibid., 143.

[216] Ibid., 137-138. These accounts are from Abū Mikhnaf, al-Dawraqī, and al-Zuhrī.

[217] Al-Balādhurī does include numerous accounts that describe Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr not being able to kill ʿUthmān and withdrawing. He provides many variant accounts in which marginal or even anonymous characters kill ʿUthmān, thus preserving the reputation of a Companion. Other accounts describe ʿUthmān as having 700 defenders, including ʿAlī and sons of key Companions. But he also includes an account that describes al-Ashtar as behind the revolt (127-8). In another, a group of *anṣār*

Balādhurī's narrative focuses on the role of ʿĀʾishah and Ṭalḥah in the revolt against ʿUthmān because they later turned against ʿAlī at the battle of the Camel. Indeed, there is a clear progression in the narrative from the former to the latter. ʿĀʾishah was accused of inciting the people against ʿUthmān;[218] she urged ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAbbās to keep the pilgrims away from such a tyrant as ʿUthmān;[219] and then, when he was dead, she accused ʿAlī of killing him and claimed ʿUthmān was better than ʿAlī.[220] Similarly, Ṭalḥah instigated the siege of ʿUthmān[221] and cut off water to ʿUthmān when he was besieged.[222] In contrast, it was ʿAlī who tried to separate the people from Ṭalḥah (and bring them back to ʿUthmān).[223] ʿUthmān himself articulated the fact that the conflict was between Ṭalḥah and ʿAlī and that ʿAlī was ʿUthmān's rightful successor.[224] When ʿUthmān saw Ṭalḥah leading the besiegers he sent word to ʿAlī, stating: "If I am going to be devoured, you be my devourer. Do you accept

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called ʿUthmān an unbeliever, declared they would be drawn near to God through ʿUthmān's blood, and killed him. (132, 139).

[218] Ibid., 112.

[219] Ibid., 119.

[220] Ibid., 142.

[221] Ibid., 123.

[222] Ibid., 140. In an al-Wāqidī account, al-Ṭabarī also makes reference to Ṭalḥah stirring up the people against ʿUthmān, but he does not develop it nearly as much as al-Balādhurī. Al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 199. Both describe ʿAlī as insisting ʿUthmān receive water. Tayeb El-Hibri analyzes the use of water imagery in narratives on the caliphate of ʿUthmān, al-Rashīd, and al-Amīn and concludes, "The denial of the caliph of a drink of a mere drink of water is a signal of the imminent end of his political rule and life." *Reinterpreting*, 91. By using this type of parallel imagery a chronicler could make literary links that drew political conclusions.

[223] Al-Balādhurī, 124.

[224] Rather than pitting ʿAlī and Ṭalḥah against each other, Ibn Shabbah describes ʿAlī emphasizing their unity. He records a dialogue between two men. The first man says that perhaps God killed ʿUthmān and the second responds, "They have decided that ʿAlī killed him. Whoever killed him killed him, perhaps God killed him." Then the first man says that he heard ʿAlī say, "I, ʿUthmān, Ṭalḥah and al-Zubayr are just as God said: 'We shall cast out any grudge they may have in their hearts (there) they will sit on couches face to face like brothers together.'" (Q 15:47). Ibn Shabbah, 201.

your cousin gets killed and that you be deprived of your authority?"[225] Like most narrators al-Balādhurī defends ʿAlī's failure to save ʿUthmān, but he also takes extraordinary measures to assert ʿAlī's right to be his successor.[226]

Al-Balādhurī wrestles to find a delicate balance between ʿAlī's right to the caliphate and the ʿAbbāsids'.[227] It is significant that he concludes the narrative of the revolt with three accounts that endorse the order of the first caliphs and condemn killing or even criticizing a caliph.[228] The first blames ʿUthmān's murder on the fact that "the succession of the Prophethood was forsaken and the command became a question of *mulk* and force; whoever wins a thing gets it'."[229] Although there is some lamenting this fact, it is still the reality. But the besiegers are not solely to blame for this state of affairs. In the second account one of ʿUthmān's supporters, ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUkaym Abī Maʿbad al-Juhanī, told one of ʿAlī's supporters: "'If your friend [ʿAlī] had been patient, the people would have come to him.'"[230] Thus ʿAlī and his supporters are as much to blame for the caliphate becoming kingship. In another account from ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUkaym, he said: "'I shall never assist in [the shedding of the] blood of a caliph after ʿUthmān.' He was asked: 'O Abū Maʿbad, have you assisted in [the shedding of] his blood?' He said: 'I consider citing his faults the same as shedding his blood.'"[231] Even though government has become a matter of force, it cannot be restored through force. These reports, which I have not seen in any other source, summarize al-Balādhurī's thesis: neither ʿAlī nor his descendents have a special right to the caliphate, the caliphate should not be taken by force, the caliph may be advised, but not criticized – regardless of his actions.[232]

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[225] Al-Balādhurī, 140, transmitted by al-Zuhrī. Al-Balādhurī includes a variant account from Isḥāq al-Farwī which states: "If I am going to be devoured, you be my devourer. Otherwise save me before I am torn to pieces." Ibid., 123.

[226] Ibn Shabbah also emphasizes the support ʿUthmān received from ʿAlī and his sons. But he does much less to position ʿAlī after the murder. For example, it is al-Ḥasan who addresses the crowd and describes the killing of ʿUthmān as a rupture in the community. It is not assumed or asserted that ʿAlī was the rightful successor who would restore unity. After ʿUthmān's death a group came demanding ʿAlī [as caliph] and could not find him. They asked al-Ḥasan, "Where is the Commander of the Faithful [ʿAlī]?" Al-Ḥasan responded: "In Ḥashsh Kawkab," which was where ʿUthmān was buried. Ibn Shabbah, 200.

[227] In addition to numerous accounts in which ʿAlī declares himself innocent of ʿUthmān's blood, he also includes one from al-Wāqidī in which ʿAlī states: "I neither liked his assassination nor hated it, neither ordered it nor forbade it." Al-Balādhurī, 156.

[228] The conclusions al-Balādhurī is drawing regarding caliphal authority I believe undermine El-Hibri's argument that when compared with later regicides, "The magnitude of the tragedy that the murder of ʿUthmān takes on in the sources derives more from the fact that such humiliation befell ʿUthmān (a personality with a saintly dimension that overshadowed his political role) than that it befell the caliphal office." *Reinterpreting*, 73.

[229] Al-Balādhurī, 159. It does not include an *isnād*, but may be from al-Madāʾinī. The speaker is Thumāma b. ʿAdiyy, the amīr of Ṣanʿa.

Al-Ṭabarī

Although al-Ṭabarī includes al-Wāqidī's account of the murder found in Ibn Saʿd and al-Balādhurī,[233] it is the account by Sayf b. ʿUmar that dominates his narrative.[234] Sayf's account juxtaposes ʿUthmān's piety and justice, as well as the unity and virtue of the Companions, with the attackers' greed and violence. The account begins with a sermon from ʿUthmān in which he encourages his listeners to take care for the next life and to remember the unity bestowed upon them by God.[235] As in other accounts ʿUthmān was surrounded by supporters, but ʿUthmān insisted they not defend him.[236] Sayf's narrative makes it clear that the majority of the people supported ʿUthmān and opposed the besiegers. Indeed the besiegers decided to kill ʿUthmān, not only because they feared approaching reinforcements, but because they had gotten themselves into an intractable situation in which killing ʿUthmān would provide a distraction so they could escape.[237]

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[230] Ibid. The account is from the daughter of ʿAbdallāh b. ʿUkaym Abī Maʿbad al-Juhanī and begins, "My father used to like ʿUthmān, and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Layla used to like ʿAlī and they were tied by a pact of brotherhood. I have never heard by father saying anything to ʿAbd al-Raḥmān about ʿAlī except what I heard him saying one day."

[231] Ibid.

[232] These are followed by another account which describes ʿAlī's daughter continuing to weep over ʿUthmān and ʿAlī joining her. Ibid., 160. Al-Balādhurī moves on to a section of poetry and then a list of ʿUthmān's children.

[233] He also attributes to al-Wāqidī a variant account in which Muḥamad b. Abī Bakr left after ʿUthmān rebuked him and it was his companions who actually killed ʿUthmān.

[234] As in al-Ṭabarī's siege narrative, al-Wāqidī continues to hold ʿUthmān at least partly responsible for the escalating violence. Al-Wāqidī includes the detail that one of ʿUthmān's supporters threw a rock down on one of the besiegers and killed him. ʿUthmān refused to turn the man over to them. Al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 200. Al-Ṭabarī also includes an account by Jaʿfar b. ʿAbdallāh in which one of ʿUthmān's supporters actually shot one of the besiegers with an arrow, showing an even greater intent to violence among ʿUthmān's supporters. Ibid., 203.

Sayf intensifies the contrast between ʿUthmān and his attackers as the siege intensified. His account states:

> During those days ʿUthmān took up the Qur'ān in tears, praying and keeping the text beside him. When he became fatigued he would sit up and read in it, for people used to regard reciting the Qur'ān as a form of worship. Meantime his defenders (*qawm*), whom he restrained, were between him and the door. When the Egyptians remained unable to break in though no one was keeping them away from the door, they brought fire and set the door and portico (*saqīfah*) ablaze. The door and portico burned until, as the wood blazed, the portico collapsed onto the door. Then, as ʿUthmān prayed, the men in the house rose up and fended off (the assailants).[238]

ʿUthmān's piety is contrasted with the attackers' aggression. The contrast is so stark, that when the attackers finally confronted him many of them are unable to strike him.

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[235] Ibid., 206. "Beware lest God's [favor towards you] be altered; cling to your community (*jamāʿah*) and do not be divided into factions. 'Remember God's blessing upon you when you were enemies, and He brought your hearts together, so that by his blessing you became brothers.'" Q 3:98.

[236] Sayf says that ʿUthmān and those with him resolved "to endure patiently and to resist the rebels through God's power." Ibid.

[237] Ibid., 211. This idea is described as being inspired by Satan.

[238] Ibid., 211-212.

Sayf shifts the blame to less prominent figures or "the rebels" generally, as he exaggerates the description of their violence. After a series of reports that reinforce the images of piety, violence, and greed, Sayf's account concludes:

> Then (the rebels) came in and attacked (ʿUthmān); one was striking him with the iron tip of his scabbard and another was beating him with his fists. A man with broad iron-tipped arrows came and stabbed him in the throat, and the blood flowed down on the Qurʾān. Even as they did this they were afraid to kill him; but he was old and lost consciousness. Still others came in, and when they saw that he was unconscious, they dragged him away by the leg. Nāʾilah and her daughters screamed. Al-Tujibi drew his sword to plunge it into (ʿUthmān's) belly. Nāʾilah shielded him, but (al-Tujībī) cut her hand, then leaned on (ʿUthmān's) chest with his sword. ʿUthmān – may God be pleased with him – was murdered before sunset. Someone cried out, "How is it that his blood is lawful and his property forbidden?' So they pillaged everything, and then broke into the Public Treasury.[239] The two guards threw down the keys and fled for their lives, shouting, 'Flee! Flee! This is what the rebels (*al-qawm*) are after.'[240]

Sayf portrays ʿUthmān as a pious old man and the besiegers as bloodthirsty rabble. Nevertheless, we are told that they later regretted their deeds, restating the fact that no one, not even these brutes, endorsed killing a caliph. It is at this point that al-Ṭabarī returns to al-Wāqidī's narrative which provides the key to contextualizing these events.

The account by al-Wāqidī jumps back in time to a conversation between ʿUthmān, speaking from his rooftop, and the besiegers below. Once again the question is whether it is legitimate to use violence, which threatens the unity of the community, in order to bring about justice. Or is it injustice that brings about disunity? In his speech ʿUthmān did not prioritize justice nor claim to be just. Rather he defended his appointment by God. He was chosen by the *shūrā*, God allowed him to be chosen and surely knew his character, he had done some good, and was not guilty of one of the three sins deserving of death. Consequently, to revolt against the ruler is to deny God's providence, and the ensuing disunity is a punishment from God. ʿUthmān concluded:

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[239] A variant account describes them groping ʿUthmān's wife, Nāʾilah, and seizing everything, even what was on ʿUthmān's wives. Ibid., 216.
[240] Ibid., 218.

> Verily, if you kill me, you will place the sword upon your own necks, and Almighty God will not lift it from you until the Day of Resurrection. Do not kill me, for if you do, you will never pray together again, nor will you ever join together in sharing out booty (*fay*ʾ), nor will God ever remove dissension from among you.[241]

ʿUthmān's argument that his murder is a denial of God's sovereignty that will lead to permanent disunity and bloodshed becomes a key part of the canon not only in his own defense, but that of all caliphs. Consequently, it is much less common to find in the narratives of ʿUthmān the besiegers' rebuttal recorded by al-Wāqidī in al-Ṭabarī.

In the rebels' response, and perhaps al-Ṭabarī's, they pointed out that it was also lawful to kill someone who spread corruption or tyranny. They replied by agreeing that ʿUthmān was appointed by God and that God knows all things, but asserted that ʿUthmān was a "test" from God. They added that ʿUthmān was once worthy of authority, but had since brought innovations. They concluded by stating:

> You mention the trials that will afflict us if we kill you. But it is not right to fail to uphold the truth against you out of fear of discord (*fitnah*) sometime in the future. You say that it is lawful to kill a man only in three cases. But in the Book of God, we find that other men are put to death besides the three named by you. [We find that] the man who spreads corruption in the land is put to death, and likewise the oppressor who fights to continue his oppression and the man who prevents justice (*al-ḥaqq*).[242]

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[241] Ibid., 221-2.
[242] Ibid., 222-3.

In this rebuttal, the rebels argued that it was necessary to risk discord and disunity in the name of justice. And violence against anyone who resists or hinders justice was likewise justified.[243] This is very different from Ibn Saᶜd and al-Balādhurī's narratives which accuse the rebels of spreading corruption in the land. Thus once again we see in the al-Wāqidī accounts the juxtaposition of appeals to obedience and justice. By including the less common appeals to justice was al-Ṭabarī defending the rights of rebels against the unjust ruler? We turn to his concluding section on ᶜUthmān's conduct for a clue.

The last detail of al-Ṭabarī's narrative, before moving on to ᶜUthmān's burial and then his children, is an account by al-Wāqidī based upon a letter from ᶜUthmān read out to the Pilgrims in Mecca by Ibn ᶜAbbās.[244] That al-Ṭabarī tells us it was Ibn ᶜAbbās is no doubt significant in light of the letter's contents.[245] The letter is a defense of the caliphate based upon Qur'anic verses that emphasize unity, obedience, and oaths of loyalty. Beginning with the verse: "Obey God, and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you,"[246] the letter continues by stating:

> Almighty God desired for you absolute obedience and unity, and warned you against rebellion, schism, and discord… If you rebel against Him, than accept the counsel of Almighty God and beware of His punishment, for you will

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[243] It is interesting that in Ibn Saᶜd and al-Balādhurī it is ᶜUthmān who mentions this fourth reason to kill a fellow Muslim, arguing that it was ᶜUthmān's critics who were the ones spreading mischief.

[244] Al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 239-245. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, al-Ṭabarī's section on ᶜUthmān's conduct relies on the transcript of two letters, one transmitted by Sayf b. ᶜUmar and the other by al-Wāqidī. The Sayf letter is a summary and defense of ᶜUthmān's caliphate, commensurate with previous Sayf accounts.

[245] Humphreys has discussed the authenticity of this letter, concluding it may reflect mid-eighth century Murjiᶜite views. He notes the absence of *ḥadīth* that would accompany later defenses of the caliphate and the aggrandizement of the caliphate typical of the Umayyad period. "Qur'anic Myth," 282.

[246] Q 4:59.

> never find a community (*ummah*) that has been destroyed save after it has fallen into discord. [Such a community can be saved] only if it has a head who can unite it. If ever you do that, you will not perform the prayer together, your enemy will be given power over you, and you will disagree as to what is lawful or forbidden. If you do that, no true religion (*dīn*) will remain before God – glory be to Him – and you will be divided into sects.[247]

This appears to be as much a defense for the ʿAbbāsids as for ʿUthmān. After a community has fallen into discord, its only salvation is a ruler (head) that can unite it. This implies strength more than virtue or justice. However, unity is also necessary to preserve true religion, and one assumes it is religion that brings justice.

The letter does include ʿUthmān's defense for his actions as just: enforcing *ḥudūd*, following the *sunnah* of his predecessors, and responding to every complaint. However, ʿUthmān also admitted that he was not innocent, but that he sought God's forgiveness and mercy – as all men should. He concluded: "Only the nation (*al-qawm*) that has gone astray despairs of God's mercy, and He accepts repentance from His servants and pardons evil deeds and knows what they do. I ask Almighty God to forgive me and you, to reconcile the hearts of this Community to what is good, and to make sin hateful to it."[248] In this way the ambiguity or tension in al-Ṭabarī's narrative remains until the end. On the one hand the injustices of the ruler should be forgiven, but on the other, the ruler should also recognize his errors and ask for that forgiveness. ʿUthmān's final statement could have been al-Ṭabarī's own prayer in light of the growing corruption in the caliphate and disruption in the provinces.[249] The only solution to the tension was for the community as a whole, ruler and ruled, to seek good and avoid evil. In the face of growing Shīʿite ideology and activity and Sunnī political weakness and communal divisions, al-Ṭabarī held up Islamic religio-political ideals as the only solution.

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[247] Al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 241-2. Ibn Shabbah's version of the letter "Verily you (pl) will not find a community destroyed except from differences [among its members] and then it will not have a head unifying it. And when that happens you will not pray together and some of you will rule over the others and you will be divided into sects (*shīʿān*)." Ibn Shabbah, 194. In contrast al-Ṭabarī's says, "Your enemy will be given power over you, and you will disagree as to what is lawful or forbidden." This version does not mention the more common corollary that they will not fight their enemies together. The concern with internal oppression seems greater than that of external threat.

[248] Al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 245.

Conclusion

Al-Ṭabarī may have been able to remain an idealist because he distanced himself from those who were responsible for actually governing the community. It is also possible that al-Ṭabarī's juxtaposition of unity and justice was influenced by the writings of Ibn Shabbah. However, Ibn Shabbah moves beyond the unity-justice framework to focus on individual responsibility. Although he urges confronting the unjust ruler, he does not endorse rebellion. This may reflect his own life experience, in which he refused to bow to the pressure of the *miḥnah* and in consequence had some of his works destroyed. Ibn Saʿd and Ibn Khayyāṭ were writing during the *miḥnah* as well. Both of them were from Basra, the center of the *miḥnah*. It is perhaps for this reason that they both wrote conservative narratives that downplay ʿUthmān's vices while also denying any special role for ʿAlī. Al-Balādhurī's narrative moves beyond legitimating the ʿAbbāsids through a defense of ʿUthmān and ʿAlī. His presentation of relations between religious and political authorities reflects his own relations with the ʿAbbāsid court. Al-Balādhurī's concern was with the practicalities of governing the community rather than idealized communities – past or present. Consequently, he urged advising, but not condemning the caliph. Moreover, he insisted that what happened to ʿUthmān did not permanently tarnish the community or the caliphate.

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[249] Kennedy, *Prophet and Age of the Caliphates*, 189-190. From the year 908/295, the death of al-Mu'tadid's successor al-Muktafī, the ʿAbbāsid caliphate entered a period of even greater financial crisis and and political feuding. "The overall picture suggests that Iraq was burdened with a military and court establishment out of all proportion to its real wealth."

The apparent ambivalence of the third/ninth and fourth/tenth century biographers and historians regarding ʿUthmān has led scholars to conclude that the great compilers of this period were doing just that: compiling. However, as we move beyond Sunnī-Shīʿite tensions to conflicting paradigms within the Sunnī group, authorial voices and strategies become more clearly evident. Historians and biographers selected, edited, and arranged their material on ʿUthmān in response to current political realities. Among these were the ʿAbbāsids' efforts to appease and also to distance themselves from the pro-ʿAlids who had brought them into power. The ʿAbbāsids also had to defend their authority with the religious leaders, who were increasingly disappointed with the ʿAbbāsid regime. However, by the end of the ninth century the crumbling of caliphal control in the face of more aggressive Turkish amīrs and Shīʿite factions, meant religious scholars had to consider carefully how to support the caliphate. An ongoing dynamism in these three key relationships: Sunnī-Shīʿite, caliph-*ʿulamāʾ*, and caliph-amīrs, is reflected in the narratives of ʿUthmān in the subsequent centuries and in the following chapter.

> A cultural tradition, by its nature, must keep changing in order to survive. Not only a steadily changing environment imposes this condition, but the very internal dynamic of the cultural dialogue which unfold the implications latent in the previous moments of creativity in the tradition. We have seen that Islamicate culture was in a process of continuous and far-reaching modification and development, and this not only in the spectacular period of its first advent but in the subsequent period of maturity. Any understanding of conservatism must see it as a part of this process.[1]

CHAPTER TWO – REACTION:

ʿUTHMĀN in SHĪʿITE & SUNNĪ FORMATION

Introduction

The conservatism that is often associated with Islamic historiographic literature after al-Ṭabarī is characterized by summaries of al-Ṭabarī and reliance on *ḥadīth* that idealize the Companions. However, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, al-Ṭabarī presented a wide range of interpretive options. Therefore, any summarizing of al-Ṭabarī through a selection of positive accounts demonstrates an active, ongoing process of reinterpreting the past in response to the needs of the present. In this chapter I consider three historical developments that influenced this more "conservative" narration of ʿUthmān in the fourth/tenth to sixth/twelfth centuries. These were the rise of a more ideologically and politically aggressive Shīʿism, the rise of the sulṭanate, and in response to these, the rise of the *ʿulamāʾ* and their relationship with both sulṭāns and caliphs.

After considering these historical developments and their theoretical implications, I turn to how they are reflected in the narratives of ʿUthmān. In regard to the more overtly Shīᶜite narratives of the late ninth and early tenth centuries, I analyze the chronicles of Aḥmad b. Abī Yaᶜqūb b. Wadīḥ al-Yaᶜqūbī (d. 283/897), Abū Muḥammad Aḥmad ibn Aᶜtham al-Kufī (d. early fourth/tenth century or earlier), and ᶜAlī b. al-Ḥusayn al-Masᶜūdī (d. 346/956). Al-Masᶜūdī also reflects a simultaneous development in which history began to have a secular or utilitarian purpose to teach moral and political lessons – rather than primarily to defend particular religio-political claims and principles.[2] This trend is more fully expressed in the universal history by Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Yaᶜqūb, more commonly known as Miskawayh (d. 421/1030). In many ways his narrative acts as the fulcrum between the Shīᶜite narratives and the Sunnī narratives that were produced in the eleventh and twelfth centuries in response to the Shīᶜites political strength and ideological appeal.

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[1] Marshall Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, vol. 2 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 375.

Narratives of ᶜUthmān that are representative of Sunnī discourse in the eleventh and twelfth centuries can be found in the works of Abū Nuᶜaym al-Iṣfahānī (d. 430/1038), Abū'l-Qāsim ᶜAlī ibn ᶜAsākir (d. 571/1176), and ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān b. ᶜAlī b. Muḥammad ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1201). Their works are more biographical than historical and are representative of Sunnī writing from this period. Biographies facilitated an idealized picture of the past because they relied on *ḥadīth* and avoided questions of historical causation and accountability. Although scholars have noted the growth of biographical literature in this period, they have failed to mention the corresponding decline in universal chronicles. The few historical accounts we do see are overwhelmingly the positive reports by Sayf b. ᶜUmar. It is ᶜIzz al-Dīn ibn al-

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[2] Tarif Khalidi attributes this to the impact of *adab* and *ḥikmah* on historical writing. *Arabic Historical Thought*, 131-6.

Athīr (d. 630/1233) who reintroduces the variety of interpretations found in al-Ṭabarī and presents a more complex picture of ʿUthmān and the events surrounding the first *fitnah*. We have not come full circle, however, and to more fully understand Ibn al-Athīr and the historians of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, who followed him, we must consider the intervening theoretical, political, and historical developments.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Shīʿite Challenge

The first issue to consider in the ongoing debates over early Islamic history in general, and ʿUthmān in particular, is the growing Shīʿite consensus of the late ninth and early tenth centuries. As the proto-Sunnī synthesis regarding the equal merit of the Companions and the four *Rāshidūn* Caliphs became the accepted, in fact, mandatory, orthodoxy, the pro-ʿAlids had to either join this group or side with their opponents, the *Rawāfiḍ*.[3] The *Rawāfiḍ*, or Shīʿites, believed not only that Muḥammad designated ʿAlī as his successor and that the caliphate/imāmate belonged to his descendents, but that Muḥammad's descendents through ʿAlī and Fāṭimah, the people of his house (*ahl al-bayt*), possessed special wisdom from God to interpret the Qurʾān and to guide the community aright.[4] In regard to the narrative of ʿUthmān, we would expect to find unique claims being made for ʿAlī and the *ahl al-bayt* over and against ʿUthmān and the Quraysh. This is often accompanied by a greater awareness on ʿAlī's part of his special appointment. Consequently we find little tension between the unity of the community, justice and obedience, in the ninth century Shīʿite sources, because it was believed all these issues would be resolved if a descendent of Muḥammad and ʿAlī were the imām.

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[3] Lapidus, "The Separation of State and Religion," 368.
[4] Ibid.

Shīʿism came into greater political prominence as well as ideological coherence in the tenth century. The ʿAbbāsid caliph's authority and power had been waning for some time, but the situation was altered fundamentally in 334/945 when Baghdad was occuppied by the Būyids. The Būyids were Daylāmis from the region south of the Caspian Sea who had been converted to Shīʿism by Ismāʿīlī missionaries in the early ninth century. The Būyid amīr, Muʿizz al-Dawla, entered Baghdad in 334/945 and promptly deposed the ʿAbbāsid caliph.[5] Joel Kraemer describes the significance of the situation: "Thus, preposterously, the son of an obscure Daylāmi pauper, of a humble family only recently converted to Islam, became the overlord of the ʿAbbasid caliph – scion of the Family of the Prophet, the 'shadow of God on Earth'."[6] The Būyids chose to retain the ʿAbbāsid caliph rather than replace him with a Shīʿite imām. Kraemer summarizes the key aspects and motivations behind the complex relationship between the Shīʿite Būyid amīrs and the Sunnī ʿAbbāsid caliphs in the following way:

> Though Shīʿīs, they [the Būyids] did not undertake to bring down the ʿAbbāsid caliphate. This policy was dictated by practical considerations. The populace of Baghdad, and of Iraq in general, was predominantly Sunnī, as were the Turkish troops, the indispensable cavalry adjunct to the Daylāmi infantry. The Būyids had to preserve a delicate balance between Shīʿī sentiment and Sunnī pressure... The widespread reverence for the authority of the caliph in Iraq, and in the Islamic world in general, was harnessed as a vehicle of

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[5] The Caliph al-Mustakfī was replaced with his son, al-Muṭīʿ lillāh, meaning "the Obedient to God" and as it happened, obedient to the Būyid *amīr al-umarāʾ* as well.

[6] Joel Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam: the Cultural Revival in the Būyid Age* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986), 35.

> legitimation for Būyid power. They received formal authorization for rule from the caliph. Usurpers of power, they needed the aura of the Sunnī caliph to confer whatever fragile legitimacy they enjoyed. They comported themselves as guardians of the caliph, who became a mere puppet in their hands. There was another reason for not removing the ʿAbbāsid Caliph in favor of a legitimate ʿAlid. Such a move would have curtailed the Būyid's own power because they would have been obliged to obey an ʿAlid caliph.[7]

The Būyids strengthened their own authority and legitimacy by defending the ʿAbbāsid caliph while not having to bow to the absolute religious and political authority that the Shīʿite imām would, by this time, have exercised, by definition. The ʿAbbāsids retained enough significance to encourage such a policy from the Būyids, but their legitimacy was based increasingly on their role as symbols of a unified Islamic community rather than playing any active part in maintaining its unity.

In fact the ʿAbbāsids were a symbol of an ideal rather than real unity. The fourth/tenth century also saw the rise of the rival Umayyad caliphate in Cordoba and Shīʿite Fāṭimid caliphate in Cairo. Starting in North Africa, the Fāṭimids spread east, taking Egypt and establishing a new capital, Cairo, in 362/973. The Fāṭimids posed a threat to the symbolic legitimacy of the ʿAbbāsids and the political and military authority of the Būyids. The Fāṭimids carried out aggressive propaganda campaigns which were successful in Medina and Mecca, where they exercised authority until the eleventh century. The Fāṭimids also fought with the Būyids for control of Syria. Even after the Būyids were overthrown and replaced by the Sunnī Saljūk Turks in

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[7] Ibid., 37-8.

447/1055 as the ruling dynasty in Bahgdad, Shīʿism remained an ideological threat to the Sunnī caliphate and a military threat to its Sunnī defenders.

Bernard Lewis explains the ongoing challenge posed by Shīʿism as follows:

> Extremist Shīʿism in its origins was, as we have seen, clearly connected with the revolt of those elements which, for one reason or another, were opposed to the established order… Serious and sustained opposition to the theocratic state tended to take the form of heresy against the dominant faith. This was not because scheming men used religion as a cloak or a mask for material purposes, but because, in an age when the problems of faith and worship took first place in men's minds, and when the state itself was conceived to be an instrument of the divine law, religion provided the necessary and inevitable expression in terms of both doctrine and action, of all major differences and discontents.[8]

The famed Saljūk vizier, Niẓām al-Mulk, reflects the Shīʿite twofold challenge. In his writings on sound government he refuted Ismāʿīlī Shīʿism. It is believed he was murdered by these Shīʿite "Assassins" in 485/1092.[9] Al-Ghazālī, who had spent time in Niẓām al-Mulk's entourage, also reflects in his writings a greater concern with internal rather than external threats to Islam. Ann Lambton notes that despite the battles being waged against the Crusaders all around al-Ghazālī, "There is no hint of any threat to Islam or Islamic territory from the non-Muslim world in al-Ghazālī's works: it would seem that the universal aims of Islam had been forgotten in the face of the problems which had been raised by the fragmentation of the Islamic world."[10]

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[8] Bernard Lewis, "The Ismāʿīlītes and the Assassins," in *A History of the Crusades*, ed. Kenneth M. Setton, Vol. I, *The First Hundred Years*, ed. Marshall W. Baldwin (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1955), 103.

[9] The early sixth/twelfth century witnessed a series of retaliatory massacres of Ismāʿīlī enclaves. Henri Laoust, *Les schisms dans l'Islam* (Paris: Payot, 1965; reprint, 1977), 196.

[10] Ann Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam: An introduction to the study of Islamic Political Theory: the Jurists*, London OrientalSeries 36 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981; reprint, 1991), 107 (page reference to reprint edition).

When the Saljūk successors; Zangī of Mosul (d. 541/1146) and his son, Nūr al-Dīn (d. 565/1174), began to unite the Muslims of Syria and the Jazira against the Crusaders, a key part of their program was a concerted attack on Shīʿite opposition and ideology. According to Gibb, when Nūr al-Dīn inherited Aleppo from his father Zangī, "In the eyes of all Islam he had become the champion of the faith, and he now consciously set himself to fulfill the duties of that role. His first task was to deal with the heretics within his gates. On first occupying Aleppo he had shown some indulgence towards the Shīʿites, but in the last months of 1148, he had perhaps already begun to take measures against them and to break up their leadership."[11] One way of attacking the Shīʿites was to promote Sunnī beliefs and values. As we will see, the historical writing of this period, which presents a glorified image of the early Islamic period, is a part of this propaganda program.[12] Thus it is not surprising that Nūr al-Dīn encouraged Ibn ʿAsākir to finish his *Taʾrīkh madīnat Dimashq*, a massive biographical dictionary of those who had passed through Damascus. James Lindsay describes Ibn ʿAsākir's methodology: "Ibn ʿAsākir's biographies are linked by a common religious, moral and legal concern which shapes his underlying agenda of compiling sacred history."[13] Nūr al-Dīn's activities in Syria were echoed by the caliphs in Baghdad. Indeed Nūr al-Dīn appears to have been enacting the ideological vision of the caliph's vizir, Ibn Hubayra (d. 560/1160).[14] In Baghdad, the Caliph al-Mustaḍī' (d. 575/1180) supported the writings of Ibn al-Jawzī, who was a favorite of the caliph and populace, and gave him in 571/1176 executive powers to mount a crackdown on extreme Shī'ism (*rafḍ*).[15] Thus we see in the tenth and eleventh centuries a resolution of the proto-Sunnī and pro-ʿAlid tensions discussed in the previous chapter in the form of polarization of the two positions. The *shī'ah* of ʿAlī insisted that the thwarted claims of ʿAlī and his descendents negated the legitimacy of the caliphate. In contrast, the Sunnīs idealized and defended the caliphate past and present.

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[11] H.A.R. Gibb, "The Career of Nūr-ad-Dīn," in *A History of the Crusades*, vol. 1, *The First Hundred Years*, 515.

[12] Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought*, 182-192.

[13] Lindsay, "Caliphal and Moral Exemplar," 255.

Political Authority

At the end of al-Ṭabarī's life the ʿAbbāsid caliph was weak and the empire in a state of chaos.[16] By 324/935 the Islamic empire had disintegrated into small states ruled by various military amīrs and even rival claimants to the caliphate in North Africa and Spain. Nevertheless, "the ʿAbbāsid caliph, reduced to political impotence, remained the living symbol of the unity of this empire, his delegation of authority sought by local potentates."[17] According to Joel Kraemer, "During the reign of the Caliph al-Rāḍī (322-29/934-40) effective power shifted to the chief emir; the caliph remained merely as a titular sovereign of the Islamic empire. This was the first step in a process in which the caliph became the spiritual head, and the chief emir, the temporal leader, of the Islamic state."[18] The division of political and religious authority was encouraged by the realities of the situation and was facilitated by the growing influence of Persian history and Greek philosophy. Iranian views of government saw religion and kingship as separate, but mutually supportive.

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[14] For more information on Ibn Hubayra and caliphal policies in this period see Herbert Mason, *Two Statesmen of Medieval Islam: Vizir Ibn Hubayra (499-560 AH/1105-1165 AD) and Caliph an-Nâṣir li Dîn Allâh (553-622 AH/1158-1225 AD)* (The Hague: Mouton Press, 1972).
[15] Cook, *Commanding Right*, 127.
[16] Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates*, 188.
[17] Kraemer, *Humanism*, 31.

The alliance between kingship and religion was believed to be endorsed by reason. The period of Būyid rule encouraged such views due to the greater need for political accommodation. The writings of Miskawayh reflect the secularism, individualism, and greater interest in ethics and philosophy that characterized the Būyid era. Like al-Masʿūdī, Miskawayh was a Shīʿite strongly influenced by Muʿtazilism, Greek philosophy, and Persian history.[19] I consider his historical writing more fully below, while focusing here on his philosophical writings for an understanding of views on political authority in the Būyid period. Miskawayh was a part of the Būyid court, moving in aristocratic circles as well as the centers of Islamic intellectual life and culture.[20] Arkoun notes, "As a philosopher, Miskawayh is distinguished by the central importance he attached to ethics."[21] However, Tarif Khalidi states that despite Ibn Miskawayh's interest in ethics, he drew a distinction between the public and private sphere. That is, when it came to government, he was concerned with *Realpolitik.* According to Khalidi, Miskawayh wrote history not to educate rulers in virtue, "but to offer to them practical examples of successful government."[22] Khalidi cites an example from Miskawayh's own career in which he agreed with the sultan's decision to punish a righteous man on the principle that it served the purposes of (good) government (*siyāsah*).[23] Thus, unlike al-Masʿūdī who sought to uphold a traditional view of the imām as political and religious head of the community,[24] Miskawayh drew a distinction between religious virtue and political necessity.

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[18] Ibid., 34.

[19] Muḥammad Arkoun, *Contribution à l'étude de l'humanisme arabe au IV^e/X^e siècle; Miskawayh (320/325-421), philosophe et historien* (Paris, 1970), 96-97 quoted in Kraemer, *Humanism*, 229. Franz Rosenthal also comments on the combination of Islamic and Iranian views of government in his article, "State and Religion according to Abū l-Ḥasan al-ʿĀmirī [d. 381/992]," *The Islamic Quarterly* 3 (1956): 42-52; reprinted in *Muslim Intellectual and Social History* (London: Variorum, 1990).

[20] Arkoun, "Miskawayh," *EI^2*.

[21] Ibid. Among Miskawayh's philosophical works is a brief work *On the Essence of Justice* as well as a *Treatise on Ethics* both of which have been translated into English. *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* – *The Refinement of Character*, trans. C. Zurayk (Beirut, 1968) and *An Unpublished Treatise of Miskawaih on Justice or Risāla fī māhiyat al-ʿadl li Miskawaih*, ed. and trans. M.S. Khan (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1964).

Miskawayh's ethical writing was closely linked with his other major interest, political theory. Agreeing with the Greeks, Miskawayh asserted, "Man is political by nature." For Miskawayh this meant man

> Cannot live in isolation like birds and wild animals; he needs association and material help for his livelihood and welfare. This association and mutual help is [civilization] (*madaniyyah*).[25] It may be in a state of cultivation (*ʿijmāra*) which is accomplished by means of many helpers and the spread of justice among them, by virtue of the power of rule (*sulṭān*), which orders their affairs, maintains their hierarchy, and removes misfortunes from them. When this is lacking, civilization becomes desolate.[26]

For Miskawayh the sulṭān, not the caliph, was responsible for ensuring justice and thereby maintaining civilization. The Sunnī response to the loss of the caliph's political authority due to historical realities and philosophical justifications, was to emphasize the religious role of the caliph based on revelation.[27]

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[22] Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought*, 174. He goes on to assert, "This is the novelty of Miskawayhi's intention and not his alleged attempt to turn history into a screen upon which are projected the virtues and vices of mankind." Ibid. On this point Khalidi is disagreeing with Arkoun's analysis in *Contribution,* even though he otherwise considers it an "admirable interpretation." *Arabic Historical Thought*, 174, fn., 121.

[23] Ibid., 176, fn. 127.

[24] Lapidus, "The Separation of the State and Religion," 368.

[25] Kraemer translates this as "urbanization" rather than "civilization."

[26] Miskawayh, *al- Hawāmil wal-Shawāmil*, pgs. 35, 69, 87, and 250-1 quoted in Kraemer, *Humanism*, 232.

The first Sunnī to systematize and defend the division of authority and the caliph's role as religiously necessary was ʿAlī b. Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb al-Māwardī (d. 974/1058). Al-Māwardī was employed by the Caliph al-Qādir (d. 422/1031) to conduct negotiations with the Būyids and to aid in the restoration of Sunnism.[28] According to Gibb, al-Māwardī wrote his *Kitāb al-aḥkam al-sulṭāniyyah* (*Book of Ordinances of Government*) for al-Qādir or his successor, al-Qāʾim, who were hoping for a restoration of ʿAbbāsid rule and were beginning to reassert their claims to political authority.[29] Al-Māwardī had the unenviable job of legitimating the status quo while also arguing for a restoration of caliphal authority -- and supporting both through Islamic law.[30] Gibb argues that the chief significance of al-Māwardī's work lies in "his avoidance of mere speculation, and the application of the classical juristic theory to contemporary facts."[31] The contemporary facts, of course were that the caliphs were the puppets of the amīrs, having little more than symbolic significance. One way to legitimate this and at the same time strengthen the caliphs' claims to authority was to focus on their religious authority.[32] Thus the basis of al-Māwardī's argument is that the imamate derives from *sharīʿah*; it is obligatory by revelation not by reason.[33]

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[27] "In the early Saljūq period there had been not merely a reassertion of Sunnism after a time of Shīʿī supremacy under the Būyids, but also a reaffirmation of the caliph's position as the head of the Islamic community, together with the incorporation of the sultanate as a necessary element in the ideal of Islamic government." Ann Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam*, 106-7.
[28] C. Brockelmann, "Al-Māwardī," *EI²*.
[29] H.A.R. Gibb, "Al-Māwardī's Theory of the Caliphate," in *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, 152.
[30] Ibid., 151-165; Lambton, *State and Government*, 87-89.
[31] Gibb, "Al-Māwardī's Theory," 153.
[32] According to Heribert Busse, "The increase of reverence offered to the caliph was intended to compensate for the loss of political strength to the emirate." "The Revival of Persian Kingship under the Būyids," in *Islamic Civilization 950-1150*, ed. D.S. Richards (London: Cassirer, 1973), 67.

Since the caliph must exist, al-Māwardī had to explain how most duties traditionally associated with the caliph were now carried out by the amīrs and the sulṭān. Al-Māwardī legitimated their usurpation of authority so long as the usurpers supported justice and Islamic law. He states:

> The activities of the usurpers must be carefully examined. If they are in accord with the provisions of Islam and in conformity with justice, then acquiescence to their control over the functions of the caliphate is permitted in order to prevent the halting of religious affairs or disruption of the Community. On the other hand, if their activities fall outside the provisions of Islam and not in conformity with justice, acquiescence to their control is not permitted. In such a situation, the aid of someone who can stay the hand of the usurpers must be sought and the usurpation must be brought to an end.[34]

In this way as long as those who do exercise power, do so justly, then their control over the caliph is acceptable in order to maintain justice, unity, and religion.

Based on order, unity, and *sharīʿah*, al-Ghazālī moved beyond al-Māwardī's theory of seizure and argued for a dividing and sharing of responsibilities between the sulṭān, caliph, and *ʿulamāʾ*.[35] Al-Ghazālī retained the view that the caliphate derived

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[33] Lambton, *State and Government*, 86. The caliphate based on Islamic law strengthened the role of both the caliph and the *ʿulamāʾ*. It also encouraged greater concern for the finer points of legalistic discourse which we will also see reflected in the narrative of ʿUthmān.

[34] Al-Māwardī, *Al-Aḥkām al-ṣultaniyyah*, ed. Maximillian Enger (Bonn, 1853), 27-8, trans. Boyd F. Johnson, 36.

[35] Leonard Binder, "Al-Ghazālī's Theory of Islamic Government," *The Muslim World* 45:3 (1955): 229-241. Leonard Binder argues al-Ghazālī's tri-partite structure stemmed from the fact he drew a distinction between the caliph and the caliphate in which the latter stood for the whole of Islamic government. Ibid., 240. Carole Hillenbrand qualifies this stating, "Certainly the three elements of caliph, sultan, and ʿulamāʾ are present in al-Ghazālī's argument, but Binder stretches the evidence too far by postulating a definition of the caliphate itself as being 'composed' of these three elements." "Islamic Orthodoxy or Realpolitik? Al-Ghazālī's Views on Government," *Iran: Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies* 26 (1988): 90. She adds, "Laoust propounds a rather similar theory, claiming that al-Ghazālī is aiming at a mixed theory of the caliphate and that he combines the caliphate

"its functional and institutional authority from the *Sharīʿah*."[36] According to Carol Hillenbrand, al-Ghazālī's theory asserted: "Quite simply, without the imamate the umma would cease to function or even to exist."[37] But the caliph's responsibilities were to symbolize "the collective unity of the Muslim community and its historical continuity."[38] Al-Ghazālī supports these assertions in his *Kitāb al-Mustaẓhirī*, written in 487/1094 or 488/1095 as a defense of the rights of the new caliph al-Mustaẓhir. In chapter six of the *Mustaẓhirī*, al-Ghazālī gives a list of caliphal qualifications very similar to a list produced by al-Māwardī. Al-Ghazālī, however, has exchanged the quality of justice for piety. It is possible that even in this subtle way we see a more clearly defined division of roles in which the caliph became responsible for unity, while justice and order fell to the sulṭān.[39] For example, in the *Mustaẓhirī*, the counsels and anecdotes are all Islamic rather than Sasanian, "and particular importance is attached to following the *Sharīʿat* and consulting *ʿulamāʾ*."[40] In

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and the sultanate in the same institution." Ibid. It is beyond the scope of this paper to resolve this difference of opinion, but for our purposes it is enough to note the furthering of the division of roles of unity and justice.

[36] Hillenbrand, "Islamic Orthodoxy or Realpolitik?,"82; Lambton, *State and Government*, 113.

[37] Hillenbrand, "Islamic Orthodoxy or Realpolitik?," 92.

[38] Ibid., 83; Lambton, *State and Government*, 113.

[39] According to al-Ghazālī there are six physical and four moral qualifications: "1) adulthood, 2) sanity 3) liberty, 4) male sex, 5) Qurayshite descent and 6) sound sight and hearing. The moral traits are: 1) military prowess (*najdah*), 2) administrative competence (*kifāyah*), 3) piety (*waraʿ*), and 4) knowledge (*ʿilm*)." *Ghazālī's Book of Counsel for Kings*, trans. F.R.C. Bagley, 2d. ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), lv. Compare this with al-Māwardī's list of qualifications: "1) justice (*ʿadālah*), 2) knowledge (*ʿilm*), i.e. Islamic law and theology, 3) sound sight, hearing, and speech, 4) sound limbs, 5) administrative competence (*kifāyah*), 6) courage and energy in war, 7) descent from Muḥammad's tribe, the Quraysh." Ibid., liv.

[40] Ibid., liii.

contrast, al-Ghazālī's *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk* (*Counsel for Kings*),[41] directed at the sulṭān, uses models from Sasanian kingship and focuses on just government.[42]

In the *Naṣīḥat al-mulūk*, al-Ghazālī advised the ruler that there are two "branches of faith:" right relationship (worship) with God and just dealings with one's subjects. He then laid out the ten principles of just and equitable treatment, the first of which is: "(the ruler) should first of all understand the importance, and also the danger, of the authority entrusted to him."[43] It is at this point that we find many of the traditional aphorisms on justice such as the prophetic *ḥadīth*: "One day of just rule by an equitable Sulṭān is more meritorious than sixty years of continual worship."[44] This is immediately followed by another *ḥadīth* listing the seven people who will find shelter in God on the Day of Resurrection, the first of whom is a just sultan. Al-Ghazālī then manipulated the remarks made by ʿAlī when he confronted ʿUthmān about being the "unjust imām." Al-Ghazālī changed ʿAlī's words to the following: "The Apostle declared that the man dearest to God on High is the just Sulṭān, and that the man who is most hateful and contemptible in the sight of the True God is the unjust Sulṭān."[45] We can see how concerns with just and unjust government had been removed from the caliph and placed upon the sulṭān.

The ʿulamāʾ

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[41] In "Islamic Orthodoxy" (91-2) Carol Hillenbrand notes that there is ongoing discussion about whether this work can be attributed in its entirety to al-Ghazālī, but the beginning section was certainly written by him and that is the only part I will be referring to here.

[42] Sasanian kings and Hebrew prophets make up the majority of his examples and the only caliphs he refers to are ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb and ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-Azīz who had already been "canonized" as ideal rulers.

[43] Al-Ghazālī, *Ghazālī's Book of Counsel for Kings*, 14.

[44] Ibid. The editor points out Muḥammad would not have used the word "sulṭān."

[45] Ibid., 15.

Al-Māwardī and al-Ghazālī both reflect an ongoing tension between justice and unity. Al-Māwardī states that efforts must be taken to resist the unjust sulṭān and the heretical caliph, but he did not provide any legal means for doing so.[46] Similarly al-Ghazālī addressed the proper relations between the caliph and the sulṭān in order to ensure government in accord with *sharīʿah*, but he is also worried about *fitnah* and Shīʿite propaganda. This brings us to the third tension addressed in the ninth century sources: the relationship between the *ʿulamāʾ* and the ruler, or rulers. This relationship was affected by the Shīʿite threat, and the division of religious and political authority. In light of the Shīʿite threats outside and inside the ʿAbbāsid administration, the Sunnī *ʿulamāʾ* came to support the caliph even more. While one would expect a vastly weakened, symbolic caliph and a pragmatic military ruler to encourage the criticism of Sunnī scholars, especially the tradition-mindedness of the Ḥanbalīs, we find the opposite to have been the case. Michael Cook describes the situation thus:

> On the one hand, the caliphal state became less formidable, while the bifurcation of power provided endless opportunities for political maneuvering by elements of Baghdadi society. And on the other hand, a certain bond was established between the Ḥanbalites and the caliphate: they needed each other in the face of local Shīʿite and alien military rulers. It is thus not hard to see how the Ḥanbalite could have lost a great deal of respect for political authority, and yet developed a new warmth towards the caliphate – their caliphate.[47]

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[46] Gibb, "Al-Māwardī's Theory," in *Studies on the Civilization of Islam*, 161.
[47] Cook, *Commanding Right*, 122.

George Makdisi describes this renewed support for the caliph as a part of a "Sunnī revival" that began in the early eleventh century.[48] But even as the *ʿulamāʾ* supported the principle of unity through the caliph, they could continue to maneuver between the sulṭān and the caliph in order to ensure justice through the *sharīʿah.*

Whereas the ShīʿiteBūyids had endorsed the Persian view that the king upholds religion, the Sunnī Traditionists were holding out this role for the *ʿulamāʾ*. The Ḥanbalīs legitimized the caliph, prodded him to act to defend and maintain religion, and mobilized the masses in his support.[49] It is in this vein that both Cook and Makdisi refer to the statement by a Ḥanbalī traditionist, Ibn al-Baqqāl (d. 440/1048) in the caliphal assembly (*dīwān*), "The Caliphate is like a tent, and the Ḥanbalīs are its tent-ropes; if the tent-ropes fall, the tent is sure to follow."[50] This image of the caliphate as a tent had been adopted from Persian models of government that described the relationship between the state and religion as that between a tent and the center supporting pole. In the tri-partite structure of tent, pole, and ropes each part supports the existence of the other. The tent (caliphate) would fall without the sulṭān and the *ʿulamāʾ*. But similarly without the caliph, the sulṭān is mere military force -- a spear piercing the naked sky, and the *ʿulamāʾ* merely ropes (that unite). It is the tent that gives both legitimate purpose and direction. All the parties involved clearly apprehend the mutual benefit and necessity of the other.

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[48] George Makdisi, "The Sunnī Revival" in *Islamic Civilization, 950-1150,* 155-168; reprinted in George Makdisi, *History and Politics in Eleventh-Century Baghdad* (London: Variorum, 1990).
[49] Makdisi, "Sunnī Revival," 164-5.
[50] Ibn Abī Yaʿlā, *Ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābila*, vol. II, p. 189 quoted in Makdisi, "Sunnī Revival," 164. Cook refers to the same statement to make a similar point.

Al-Ghazālī and others were willing to accommodate an unjust sulṭān in the belief that the establishment of order and the maintenance of discipline enabled the *ʿulamāʾ* to facilitate justice through their own activities.[51] Al-Ghazālī saw a prominent role for the *ʿulamāʾ* in guiding the sulṭān and caliph and thereby in governing the community. Thus al-Ghazālī's second principle for rulers was that they "should be always thirsting to meet devout *ʿulamāʾ* and ask them for advice."[52] In turn the *ʿulamāʾ* were responsible for guiding the ruler. Consistent with his views on the significant role of the *ʿulamāʾ*, al-Ghazālī was comparatively activist in his urging of the *ʿulamāʾ* to confront unjust rulers. He believed, were it not for the threat of *fitnah*, rebellion and violence against an unjust ruler would be permissible. Moreover, he did allow individuals the right to use force without the permission of the ruler. He also reinstated the idea that confronting a ruler is a virtue, and that if it cost someone his life he was a martyr. Using harsh language against a ruler, as long as it does not cause harm to anyone else is also a virtue. According to al-Ghazālī, the problem was not with unjust rulers, but with scholars who had grown silent in their love for things of this world.[53]

It appears that often the *ʿulamāʾ* did not confront the ruler, not because of a fear of *fitnah*, but because of their own close relations with the state.[54] The greater role of the *ʿulamāʾ* in the court, especially when the Shīʿite Būyids were replaced by the Sunnī Saljūk Turks, encouraged a more cooperative position. Cook notes, "The more we hear about the entanglement of the Ḥanbalites in the web of direct and indirect state patronage, the less we tend to hear about forbidding wrong."[55] Although al-Ghazālī was open to scholars confronting the rulers, his was a minority voice.[56] Cook points out, "It was Ghazālī's views on armed bands that provoked the most widespread dissent. Scholars borrowing his account often modified it to recommend or require permission of the ruler for such activity."[57] Ibn al-Jawzī also discouraged confronting the ruler and was particularly critical of al-Ghazālī's endorsement of "heroic incivility to rulers."[58] Ibn al-Jawzī's support for the caliph as an ideal ruler, despite possible shortcomings, comes through in his narrative of ʿUthmān as well.

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[51] Binder, "Al-Ghazālī's Theory," 239.

[52] Al-Ghazālī, *Ghazālī's Book of Counsel for Kings*, 19.

[53] Cook, *Commanding Right*, 447.

[54] The nature of these relations is more fully explored by Michael Chamberlain in *Knowledge and Social Practice*.

What we see then is an ongoing, albeit subdued, debate on the relationship between the *ʿulamāʾ* and the government in the matter of unity and justice. However, in the period under discussion the threat posed by the Shīʿites pushed scholars much further towards the obedience and unity position. Furthermore, the division between political and religious authority, in which the caliph symbolized the latter, reduced the need to debate the caliphs' shortcomings or responsibilities. It is not surprising then that the Sunnī *ʿulamāʾ* of this period focus on glorifying the Companions and *Rāshidūn* Caliphs for their piety rather than their politics. This approach strengthens the *ʿulamāʾ*'s position as men of the religious sciences and also sidesteps the limited political role of the caliph. This approach was more consistent with the format and intent of biographical dictionaries which came to dominate Sunnī historical writing in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.[59] These biographical dictionaries relied on *ḥadīth* to produce sterilized, laudatory accounts to distance their subjects from the more complex aspects of historical narration and questions of causality and responsibility.[60] But this "conservatism" needs to be seen as a response to the Shīʿite and secular trends in the discourse and thus as part of an ongoing dialogue.

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[55] Cook, *Commanding Right,* 127.
[56] Cook notes, "Jishumi (d. 494/1101) alone among the classical writers identifies forbidding wrong with rebellion against the unjust ruler, and does so in a tone of marked enthusiasm." Ibid., 226.
[57] Ibid., 140-1.
[58] Ibid., 457-8.

THE NARRATORS

The Shīʿite Challenge

Two of the earliest and best known Shīʿite articulations of early Islamic history are found in the *Taʾrīkh* of al-Yaʿqūbī[61] and al-Masʿūdī's *Murūj al-dhahab wa maʿādin al-jawhar* (*The Meadows of Gold and the Mines of Gems*).[62] In contrast to earlier Sunnī chroniclers, they abandon the *isnad/khabār* format, presenting a smoother and briefer narrative.[63] Al-Yaʿqūbī's history has been described as the

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[59] Bushra Hamad notes authors often use the word *manāqib* (virtues) when they mean biography. Bushra Hamad, "History and Biography" *Arabica* 45:3 (1998): 223.

[60] Cook suggests another possible explanation when he observes: "The later institution of Islamic scholarship in the *madrasah* must have significantly reduced the pressure on scholars to be interesting. This may help to account for the dry character of much of the biographical literature of later centuries." *Commanding Right*, 50, fn. 25.

[61] Aḥmad b. Abī Yaʿqūb al-Yʿaqūbī, *Taʾrīkh* (Beirut: Dār Bayrūt, 1960).
Wilferd Madelung pronounces al-Yaʿqūbī "generally not a reliable source for early Islamic history" without giving a reason and while noting that he was "accepted" by Wellhausen. Madelung, *Succession*, 100 n. 107. In either case, our primary concern is not with the veracity of his accounts.

[62] ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn al-Masʿūdī, *Murūj al-dhahab wa maʿādin al-jawhar fī al-taʾrīkh* (Cairo: 1927). According to Tarif Khalidi, "Masʿūdī is the first major Muslim author of extant historical works to reflect, in a systematic manner, upon the value and method of history." Khalidi, *Islamic Historiography: The Histories of al-Masʿūdī* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1975), 28. Perhaps this is why Ibn Khaldūn called al-Masʿūdī the imām of historians, even though he criticized his reliability as a source. Ibid., 144.

[63] Al-Yaʿqūbī says in his introduction that he only includes accounts that have received wide acceptance. Donner, *Narratives*, 258. Khalidi attributes the dropping of isnads to the limits of this format when moving beyond Islamic history and the influence of *adab* on historical writing. He states: "If history was to yield its lessons, the historian would have to sever the 'chain' of *isnād* and draw out

"earliest full statement of the 'Shīʿite paradigm' of early Islamic history."[64] Al-Masʿūdī held to the Shīʿite view of the imāmate, but was also strongly influenced by Muʿtazilism and Persian history.[65] Thus he appears as a transitional figure between the writers of the ninth and later tenth centuries.[66] The influence of Iranian views of kingship may be reflected in the fact that al-Masʿūdī holds ʿUthmān personally responsible for the collapse of the Community, while al-Yaʿqūbī blames it on earlier corruption among the Companions and in the community.[67]

Regardless of when, both authors agree that the community, Companions, and caliphate went astray. Consequently, neither one defends the unity of the community or the office of caliph in the narrative of ʿUthmān. Yves Marquet and Fred Donner have noted this in al-Yaʿqūbī's narrative when he speaks of the "days" of Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, and ʿUthmān and reserves the term "caliphate" (*khilāfah*) for the reigns of ʿAlī and his sons.[68] Tarif Khalidi also traces the impact of al-Masʿūdī's Shīʿism in his history. He notes, "ʿAlī's career is woven conspicuously into the fabric of the Prophet's life. He is the closest Muslim to the Prophet and his natural successor."[69]

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the full implications of the narrative by revealing his own intentions and strategy." Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought*, 82. He contrasts this to Ṭabarī, for whom he says we will probably never know what he really thought of the moral behavior of Muḥammad's Companions. Ibid., 81.

[64] Humphreys, *Islamic History*, 102.

[65] Al-Masʿūdī greatly admired al-Jāḥiẓ, although he praises him more for his brevity and entertaining style than his philosophical outlook or religio-political position. Khalidi, *Islamic Historiography*, 19. Although strongly influenced by Muʿtazilism in terms of style and use of logic and Greek philosophy, he ultimately disagrees regarding the imāmate. Ibid., 133. Stephen Humphreys gives a briefer and comparative analysis of al-Masʿūdī's Shīʿism. Humphreys, "Qurʾanic Myth," 279.

[66] Khalidi, *Islamic Historiography*, 143.

[67] Humphreys, *Islamic History*, 102-3 and "Qur'anic Myth," 279.

[68] Yves Marquet, "Le šīʿisme au IXᵉ siècle à travers l'histoire de Yaʿqūbī," *Arabica* XIX (1972): 1; Donner, *Narratives*, 134.

[69] Khalidi, *Islamic Historiography*, 120. The Umayyads do not fare much better, while his view of the ʿAbbasids is more complex, at least granting them the title of caliph, while only the Umayyad caliph ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-Azīz is referred to as caliph. Ibid., 129.

Not surprisingly, al-Masʿūdī was hostile to ʿUthmān and portrayed him as a spendthrift and lover of luxury and wealth.[70]

A third "Shīʿite" source considered here is the *Kitāb al-futūḥ* by Ibn Aʿtham.[71] Ibn Aʿtham is surrounded by controversy and uncertainty and his narrative is much more difficult to categorize than al-Masʿūdī or al-Yaʿqūbī. Although he did not include *isnāds* either, he produced a much more detailed narrative that is similar to al-Balādhurī and al-Ṭabarī.[72] His accounts are more critical of ʿUthmān, but he still defends the unity of the community and praises ʿAlī for trying to do the same. In this he may reflect the pro-ʿAlid position of the ninth century more than the Shīʿite one of the tenth century. Or it may simply be that he still struggled with the desire for a unified community since scholars point to other Shīʿite markers in his history that place him in the early tenth century.[73] Having looked at his narrative of ʿUthmān only, I do think he was writing after al-Balādhurī and al-Ṭabarī. The slight alterations in his narrative that further vilify ʿUthmān and praise ʿAlī provide an example of historical and literary vitality.

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[70] Ibid., 122.

[71] Abū Muḥammad Aḥmad Ibn Aʿtham al-Kūfī, *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, ed. Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Maʿīd Khān (Beirut: Dār al-Narwa lil-Jadīda, n.d). The section on the *shūrā* is taken from a different edition (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 1986). There is disagreement regarding Ibn Aʿtham's dates. Sezgin puts his death date at "possibly 314/926." Brockelmann, *GAS*, I, 329. This is repeated by Muḥammad al-Maʿīd Khān. Suleiman Mourad also gives a fourth/tenth century death date in his article, "On Early Islamic Historiography," 579. But in M. Shaban's entry for Ibn Aʿtham in the second edition of *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, he places Ibn Aʿtham as a contemporary of al-Madāʾinī and states the *Kitāb al-futūḥ* was composed in 204/819. Patricia Crone notes this discrepancy in dating as support for her thesis that the early chronicles were a result of an "explosion" and no organizational element can be detected in them. However, she goes on to agree with the later date, due to its more developed Shīʿite polemic. Crone, *Slaves*, 208. Fred Donner, also points to the disagreement, leans towards the later date, but makes no assertion one way or the other beyond the fact that the difficulty supports his thesis that certain themes were set early on from which writers could not deviate. Donner, *Narratives*, 132.

[72] Ibn Aʿtham does provide a general list of his authorities at the beginning of his history. These include: al-Madāʾinī, al-Wāqidī, al-Zuhrī, Abū Mikhnaf, Ibn al-Kalbī and other lesser traditionists.

[73] See above.

Miskawayh

According to Mashall Hodgson, "Probably the most important historian after al-Ṭabarī was more a faylasūf than a sharīʿā scholar: the Persian Abū- ʿAlī Aḥmad Ibn Miskawayhi."[74] In his universal history, *Tajārib al-umam* (*The Experience of Nations*), Miskawayh relied heavily on al-Ṭabarī.[75] Stylistically, however, they are a study in contrasts as Miskawayh removed the *isnāds*, condensed the text and wrote in a more engaged and personal manner.[76] However, analysis and appreciation of Miskawayh's style and views has focused largely on the latter part of his history dealing with the Būyids, while the earlier part has been largely dismissed as a summary of al-Ṭabarī.[77] Nevertheless, Miskawayh's own views and current circumstances did affect the way he condensed al-Ṭabarī.[78]

Miskawayh portrays ʿUthmān as a caliph who represented and maintained the unity of the community, but was not responsible for justice and matters of government. In his account of ʿUthmān's reign, Miskawayh relies primarily on accounts by Sayf b. ʿUmar in which ʿUthmān does not make mistakes because he appears to have little responsibility for governing the Community.[79] This interpretation reflects the political realities under the Būyids. However, once the siege is under way Miskawayh switches to accounts by al-Wāqidī which portray ʿUthmān as personally responsible for his untimely end and make no reference to his personal piety. The lack of sympathy for ʿUthmān and the absence of any criticism whatsoever of the rebels reflects the realities under the Būyids who had themselves deposed a caliph.

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[74] Hodgson, *Venture*, vol II, 163.

[75] Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Miskawayh, *Tajārib al-umam*, ed. Abū al-Qāsim al-Imāmī (Teran: Dār Sarūsh lil-Ṭabāqah wa-l-Nashr, 1987). Miskawayh studied al-Ṭabarī's *History* which may explain his own interest in universal history. Arkoun, "Miskawayh," *EI²*.

[76] Kraemer, *Humanism*, 229.

[77] Arkoun describes it as "a universal history from the Flood to the year 369/980, whose originality only appears in the last part dealing with the Būyids." "Miskawayh," 143. This portion has been edited and translated by H.F. Amedroz and D.S. Margoliouth as *The Experience of Nations*, 7 vols., in their series *TheEclipse of the ʿAbbasid Caliphate* (Oxford, 1920-1).

[78] According to Kraemer, "Miskawayh's intention in his great historical work was to record the experiences of nations so that men (mainly rulers and government officials) might derive lessons from the examples that recur in history. The work is tonally and thematically secular." Kraemer, *Humanism*, 228. For example, Miskawayh says nothing about the *maghāzī* of the Prophet Muḥammad

The Sunnī Reaction

The Sunnī reaction to Shīʿism and the sulṭanate is evidenced as early as the writings of Miskawayh's contemporary, Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣfahānī, and reached perhaps its fullest expression in Ibn ʿAsākir. As a ṣūfī and famed *ḥadīth* transmitter, Abū Nuʿaym is in many ways the exact opposite of his contemporary Miskawayh.[80] His two best known works are *Ḥilyat al-awliyāʾ wa-ṭabaqāt al-aṣfiyāʾ* which was written to "strengthen what he regarded as the true Sufism" and *Dhikr akhbār Iṣfahān* which is basically a biographical dictionary of the city.[81] Here, we are interested, however, in his biographical dictionary of the Companions, *Mʿarifat al-ṣaḥābah*.[82] In his entry for ʿUthmān, Abū Nuʿaym relies heavily on *ḥadīth*, which had accumulated and been elaborated on since the days of al-Bukhārī and Muslim. Abū Nuʿaym praises ʿUthmān as a model of religious virtue while the reader is left to wonder why anyone would revolt against him.

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[79] This is an odd choice for someone with Shīʿite sympathies, since Sayf's narrative is quite pro-Umayyad.

[80] J. Pedersen, "Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣfahānī," *EI²*. However, as a Shafiʿī, he suffered from the strife between Ḥanbalīs and Shafiʿīs, and suffered bodily attack and was even expelled from the mosque of Iṣfahān. Ibid.

[81] Ibid. Compare this with Miskawayh who criticizes ṣūfīs for receiving help from society while not offering to give help in return.

[82] Aḥmad b. ʿAbdallāh Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣfahānī, *Mʿarifat al-ṣaḥābah*, vol. 1 (Riyad: Dār al-Waṭn lil-Nasr, 1998)

ʿAlī b. ʿAsākir reflects a more developed stage of *ḥadīth*-based biographical writing.[83] He was writing not under Shīʿite Būyids, but for Nūr al-Dīn, who encouraged Ibn ʿAsākir's writings as a part of his own campaign to glorify the principles of Sunnī Islam and root out lingering Shīʿite groups.[84] According to N. Elisséeff,

> Because of the eminent position of the Banū ʿAsākir in Damascus society and his personal prestige as a ḥāfiẓ and lawyer, Nūr al-Dīn, on his occupation of Damascus in 549/1154, immediately established contact with him; the sovereign found in ʿAlī a valuable ally in successfully implementing his program of Sunnī reaction in Damascus. For him Nūr al-Dīn built the first dar al-ḥadīth, known also as the dar al-sunna. From then on it was the task of the Banū ʿAsākir to lead the struggle against the shi'is and to spread traditional Sunnī teaching.[85]

This cooperative relationship, and the role of historical writing in service to the needs of the state, reflects Tarif Khalidi's observations on the renewed interest in Islamic history during this period. According to Khalidi the Crusades encouraged a 'then-and-now' historical perspective in which the contemporary struggles against the Crusaders were compared with the triumphs of the early Islamic period.[86]

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[83] ʿAlī b. al-Ḥasan Ibn ʿAsākir, *Taʾrīkh madīnat Dimashq: ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān*, ed. Sakīnah al-Shihābī, vol. 39 (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.).

[84] N. Elisséeff, "Ibn ʿAsākir," *EI*^{2}.

[85] "Ibn ʿAsākir witnessed the death of Nūr al-Dīn and was present at Saladin's entry into Damascus in 571/1175. He died a few months later, on 11 Rajab 571/25 January 1176. The Ayyūbid sulṭān was present at his funeral." Ibid., 714.

[86] Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought*, 184. Donner adds, "The prevalence of such 'moralizing' accounts suggests that Ibn ʿAsākir's *highest* priority may have been collecting accounts that revealed the personal characteristics of his biographies, including the attitude of the Prophet towards them, and that relating information about events in Syria itself was of secondary importance." Donner, "ʿUthmān and the Rāshidūn Caliphs," 50. On this tendency, see also James E. Lindsay, "Caliphal and Moral Exemplar?" In his analysis of Ibn ʿAsākir's entries for several prominent Umayyad figures, Steven

Ibn ʿAsākir' *Ta'rīkh* reflects the perceived Sunnī need at the time to glorify and idealize the events and characters of early Islam. Fred Donner believes, "This tendency shows up especially in Ibn ʿAsākir's apparent determination to portray ʿUthmān, the most controversial of the Rāshidūn, in an almost overwhelmingly positive light."[87] Ibn ʿAsākir's entry for ʿUthmān fills a five-hundred page volume.[88] The lengthy entry reflects his expertise as a *muḥaddith* in which he presents pages of varying accounts with complete *isnāds*. However, the sense of all-inclusiveness is deceptive. Ibn ʿAsākir was clearly presenting ʿUthmān as a religious figure and accounts about government policies or behavior that was controversial or could be open to criticism are remarkably absent. This contrasts markedly with the countless minor variations he provides of *ḥadīth* and any positive *akhbār*. In his analysis of Ibn ʿAsākir's "strategies of composition," Donner concludes that this tendency does not reflect Ibn ʿAsākir's expertise as a *muḥaddith*; rather he "was utilizing such a strategy of repetition to help steer his readers to the point of view he desired."[89] This was the view of ʿUthmān as an ideal caliph, the model of piety and probity.

Another *ʿālim* (pl. *ʿulamā'*) writing not for the court of an amīr, but the ʿAbbāsid caliph in Baghdad, was Ibn al-Jawzī. He was a Ḥanbalī jurist who, like Ibn

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Judd notes that Ibn ʿAsākir made little use of many well known Iraqi sources such as al-Ṭabarī, al-Wāqidī, al-Balādhurī and al-Madā'inī. Judd concludes that this may be because he wanted to focus on Syrian sources. Judd, "Ibn ʿAsākir's Sources for the late Umayyad Period," in *Ibn ʿAsākir and Early Islamic History*, 78-99. Further study is needed to see whether it was the content of these sources rather than their location that was a factor.

[87] Donner, "ʿUthmān and the Rāshidūn Caliphs," 60.

[88] It is the longest single source of which I am aware.

[89] Ibid., 58.

ᶜAsākir, typified the close relationship between the *ᶜulamā'* and the court.[90] He wrote numerous treatises defending Sunnism and the caliphate. While Ibn ᶜAsākir was writing in Damascus and Nūr al-Dīn was intervening against the Fāṭimids of Egypt, the Caliph al-Mustanjid (d. 566/1170) "authorized Ibn al-Jawzī to preach sermons in the Palace mosque – sermons in which the famous preacher vigorously defended the *Sunna* and criticized, not only those whom he considered to be schismatics, but also the *fuqahā'* who were too blindly attached to their own *madhhabs*."[91] He believed imitation of noteworthy Companions was the true path. It is not surprising then that his best historical work is found in his laudatory biographies of the first four caliphs,[92] ᶜUmar b. ᶜAbd al-Azīz, Ibn Ḥanbal, and perhaps others.[93]

Ibn al-Jawzī wrote an annalistic chronicle of Islam, *Al-Muntaẓam fī ta'rīkh al-mulūk wa'l-umam*,[94] in which he made a significant innovation by combining biography and history, including at the end of each year the biographies of all those who had died during that year.[95] Strongly influenced by the biographical tradition, he relies heavily in his works on Abū Nuᶜaym al-Iṣfahānī and al-Khatīb al-Baghdadī (d. 463/1070-1). In the early part of his history, however, he relies heavily on al-Ṭabarī, and unlike Ibn ʿAsākir, has extended narratives with minimal *isnāds* and few *ḥadīths*. However, like Ibn ʿAsākir he too is concerned with praising the Companions, and so it is not surprising that in the narrative of ʿUthmān, Ibn al-Jawzī uses accounts almost exclusively from Sayf b. ʿUmar. Nevertheless, he does not present nearly as white-washed a picture of ʿUthmān or his caliphate. This is probably because Ibn al-Jawzī was writing for the caliph himself and therefore presents ʿUthmān as a ruler with greater political responsibilities. Moreover, to completely idealize ʿUthmān would have been to highlight the shortcomings of his own less-than-perfect patron.

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[90] Michael Cook notes that he rejects many of al-Ghazālī's endorsements of the use of violence without the ruler's permission as well as the virtue of verbally confronting a ruler. "In each case Ibn al-Jawzī has seen fit to tone down Ghazzālī's politics in a sense favourable to the state." *Commanding Right*, 140.

[91] Henri Laoust, "Ibn al-Djawzī," *EI²*.

[92] Only the one on Abū Bakr and ᶜUmar is still extant.

[93] Ibid.

[94] Ibn al-Jawzī, *Al-Muntaẓam fī ta'rīkh al-mulūk wa'l-umam*, ed. Muḥammad ᶜAbd al-Qādir ᶜAṭā and Muṣṭafā ᶜAbd al-Qādir ᶜAṭā, vol. 4 and 5 (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ᶜIlmiyyah, 1992).

[95] It is more of an annalistic biographical dictionary, however. For example, the years of ᶜUthmān's reign cover ninety pages of text of which less than twenty-five deal with ᶜUthmān's caliphate. This format will be adopted by Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Dhahabī, and no doubt others. They include more historical than biographical data, however.

THE NARRATIVES

These narratives follow only roughly the five chapters of ʿUthmān's caliphate laid out in chapter one: his conduct, the *shūrā*, caliphate, siege, and murder. In many ways the narrative has become more personal: the Shīʿites praise ʿAlī and condemn ʿUthmān and the Companions while the Sunnīs praise ʿUthmān and the Companions. Nevertheless these personalities, their conflicts and confrontations, can reveal ongoing discussions of more abstract principles such as the role of the caliph and the nature of the community. Therefore I group the comparative textual analyses around the portrayal of four groups or ideas: ʿAlī and the Companions, ʿUthmān, the caliphate and community, and ʿUthmān's murder. This comparative analysis highlights the means and ends of ongoing historical dialogue on the rebellion against ʿUthmān.

Portrayals of ʿAlī and the Companions

We see in these sources slight variations within the two broad interpretive categories of Shīʿite and Sunnī Islam. The former elevates ʿAlī and asserts his greater right to the caliphate, while the Companions appear divided among themselves. There is also some variation on the support ʿAlī gave to ʿUthmān and the related issue of the significance of a united Islamic community. In contrast, the Sunnī writers all emphasize the support ʿAlī and other Companions gave to ʿUthmān. ʿUthmān was the right man at the right time and the revolt against him was due to other sources of corruption in the community. ʿUthmān was a martyr because he was willing to die in order to maintain the unity of the community. In the Sunnī sources, however, there are also slight variations as Abū Nuʿaym and Ibn ʿAsākir portray ʿUthmān as an idealized religious figure and Ibn al-Jawzī portrays him as an ideal ruler.

The Shīʿite Challenge

In his account of the *shūrā*, al-Yaʿqūbī presents a Shīʿite interpretation which asserts ʿAlī's right to the caliphate while denying any special authority to the Companions.[96] First of all al-Yaʿqūbī makes no mention of three key points in the ninth century narratives, namely that ʿUmar appointed the members of the *shūrā*, that the six were especially trusted by Muḥammad, or that ʿUmar designated ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. ʿAwf to cast the deciding vote. Omission of these details undermines the authority of the *shūrā* from the very beginning. In the process of the election, al-Yaʿqūbī also asserts the rights and abilities of ʿAlī and the Shīʿite imāms over the

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[96] Humphreys notes: "Yaʿqūbī lays particular stress on the way in which ʿUthmān was elected to the Caliphate. His presentation of this event argues that ʿUthmān was elected only because the leaders of the community rejected ʿAlī." Humphreys, "Quranic Myth," 279.

Companions and the Traditions. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān appointed himself arbiter and asked ʿAlī and ʿUthmān if they would govern the affairs of the community based on the book of God, the *sunnah* of the Prophet, and the *sīrah* of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar. ʿAlī responded that he would follow the book of God and the *sunnah* of the Prophet to the best of his ability -- significantly dropping any reference to Abū Bakr and ʿUmar.[97] In contrast, ʿUthmān responded affirmatively on all points. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān asked them the same thing three times until ʿAlī exclaimed in exasperation that no one can follow the book of God and the example of the Prophet perfectly and that therefore ʿAbd al-Raḥmān must be trying to keep the matter of the caliphate from him.[98] ʿAlī's response points to the corruption among the *shūrā* members and downplays both the *sīrah* of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar as well as the need to imitate the Prophet exactly. This is consistent with Shīʿite views of the imāmate that stress their independent and ongoing authority.

Ibn Aʿtham's account of the *shūrā* portrays ʿAlī as sure of his right to the caliphate, but deferring it for the sake of the unity of the community. That ʿAlī has a special status is suggested by the fact that Ibn Aʿtham provides a blessing only after ʿAlī's name in the *shūrā* account.[99] But he also supports ʿAlī's commitment to the Companions when he precedes the *shūrā* with a section describing how it was ʿAlī who washed ʿUmar's body and prepared it for burial. The problem, according to Ibn Aʿtham, is that the Companions allowed their selfish desires to keep them from making the right choice. His narrative is very similar to al-Ṭabarī's; however in Ibn Aᶜtham, ᶜAlī agrees to go along with the *shūrā* only so long as they build on a foundation and not merely follow after [their own] desires and do what God and his Prophet would accept.[100] The fact that they did not invalidates the *shūrā*'s choice.

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[97] Al-Yaʿqūbī, 162.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibn Aʿtham's section on the *shūrā* is titled: "mention of the disagreement of the Muslims after the death of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb and the agreement/settlement (*ʿaqd*) of the caliphate on ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān."

In Ibn Aᶜtham the tension between the importance of the Companions and the unity of the community and ᶜAlī's rights, continues in the dialogues between ᶜAlī and Ibn ᶜAwf. ᶜAlī agreed to Ibn ᶜAwf's arbitration only after stating he believed he had the greater right to the caliphate, while also acknowledging there was no explicit designation from Muḥammad. If there was, he stated, clearly he would fight for it. This is clearly not the developed Shīᶜite position, but perhaps it was one way to explain why ᶜAlī did not do more to fight for his right to the caliphate. It is this type of evidence that may support Shaban's earlier date since it supports a pro-ᶜAlid rather than a Shīᶜite understanding. Similarly, when asked what he would do if it was given to someone else, ᶜAlī said he would be patient and "fulfill what is in it for the good of the Muslims."[101] At the same time, however, Ibn Aᶜtham alters the earlier narratives in key ways. For example, when al-Ṭabarī's narrative states ᶜAlī was deceived by the machinations of the *shūrā* members, Ibn Aᶜtham records an assertion from ᶜAlī that he was NOT deceived, but went along with the *shūrā* for the good of the community.[102]

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[100] Ibn Aᶜtham, 333.
[101] Ibid., 334. Ibn Aᶜtham also shows ᶜAlī defending ᶜUthmān and negotiating with the besiegers. Ibn Aᶜtham, 229. In contrast, al-Yaᶜqūbī states ᶜUthmān sent out ᶜAmr b. al-ᶜĀṣ. Then when the band returns for the second siege, ᶜUthmān blames ᶜAmr for stirring the people up against him. Al-Yaᶜqūbī, 175. This is different from al-Balādhurī's account in which Marwān convinces ᶜUthmān it was ᶜAlī who was instigating the revolt. See above.
[102] Ibn Aᶜtham, 335.

More than Ibn Aʿtham, al-Yaʿqūbī and al-Masʿūdī develop the special status of ʿAlī and his house. For example, in al-Yaʿqūbī, Abū Dharr al-Ghafārī entered the mosque in Medina to stir up the people against ʿUthmān and *in favor of ʿAlī.* He described ʿAlī as the inheritor of the knowledge of the Prophet and that there is a special place for the people of his house.[103] The account continues by describing how as Abū Dharr stood at the door of the mosque, slowly more and more people listened to him and gathered to him – and to ʿAlī.[104] This is different from the accounts in al-Ṭabarī and al-Balādhurī in which ʿAlī went out and drew the people to himself and ʿUthmān and away from Ṭalḥah who was stirring the people up against ʿUthmān. Al-Masʿūdī also records ʿAlī confronting ʿUthmān stating, "I am more worthy (*afḍal*) than you, my father is more virtuous than your father and my mother more virtuous than your mother."[105] He also records Abū Dharr proclaiming the special rights of the people of Muḥammad's house.[106] Al-Masʿūdī's narrative further juxtaposes the virtues of the people of Muḥammad's house with the Quraysh who fought against Muḥammad at the Battle of Badr.[107]

Al-Yaʿqūbī and Ibn Aʿtham both highlight how ʿĀʾishah and Ṭalḥah were actively working to have ʿUthmān deposed. Both record an argument between ʿĀʾishah and ʿUthmān because he had reduced the stipend for the wives of the Prophet and she was angry about this.[108] She said: "O ʿUthmān, you have devoured your trustworthiness and oppressed your citizens, and governed them with evil from the people of your house. God will not give you water to drink from above and will withdraw [His] blessings from under you."[109] She concluded by stating were it not for the five prayers a day, a band would come and slaughter him just as one slaughters a camel. ʿUthmān responded by quoting the Qurʾanic verse that condemns to hell the wives of Noah and Lot for their unfaithfulness.[110] The account continues by stating, "ʿĀʾishah was exerting all her effort and abilities to kill ʿUthmān. She said: 'O people, this shirt of the messenger of God did not wear out without his *sunnah* deteriorating. Kill *naʿthal.* May God kill *naʿthal*'."[111] Al-Yaʿqūbī and Ibn Aʿtham describe Ṭalḥah as also stirring up the people against ʿUthmān and leading the siege against him.[112] The portrayal of ʿĀʾishah and Ṭalḥah in particular is significant since they were the ones who also led the opposition to ʿAlī's caliphate and fought against him in the Battle of the Camel.

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[103] Al-Yaʿqūbī, 171.
[104] Ibid., 172.
[105] Al-Masʿūdī, 439.
[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid., 440. Although these accounts mention Marwān and even direct blame for the letter upon him, there is not the same effort to shift all blame from ʿUthmān onto Marwān, nor is there the same juxtaposition of Marwān and ʿAlī found in the ninth century sources.

The Sunnī Reaction

These portrayals of ʿAlī and the Companions contrast markedly with those found in Ibn ʿAsākir.[113] Ibn ʿAsākir begins his narrative of ʿUthmān with roughly 200 pages of Prophetic *ḥadīths* praising and defending ʿUthmān in one way or another. Many of these are transmitted by ʿĀʾishah and develop the defense for ʿUthmān and his caliphate. Ibn ʿAsākir includes the *ḥadīths* from the third/ninth century collections regarding Muḥammad's modesty in front of ʿUthmān and prediction of the *fitnah* against him. Ibn ʿAsākir, however, includes pages and pages of these with slight variations or different *isnāds*.[114] Moreoever, in a *ḥadīth* based on ʿĀʾishah we are told that Muḥammad received a revelation when she and ʿUthmān were with him and ʿUthmān wrote it down.[115] These are followed by even more *ḥadīths* by prominent Companions, especially ʿAlī. Although some of these *ḥadīths* appeared in Ibn Ḥanbal or Abū Nuʿaym, they appear often in a more elaborated form in Ibn ʿAsākir. In addition to *ḥadīths* transmitted by ʿAlī and the Companions praising ʿUthmān, there are *ḥadīths* that are clearly designed to elevate ʿUthmān's status over ʿAlī's.

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[108] Al-Yaʿqūbī, 175; Ibn Aʿtham, 224.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Q 66:10.
[111] Ibn Aʿtham, 224-5. This appears to have been ʿUthmān's nickname, and could mean either "hyena" or "babbling old man," an insult in either case.
[112] Ibid., 228; al-Yaʿqūbī, 175.
[113] Miskawayh does not seem particularly concerned with Sunnī-Shīʿite tensions.

Ibn ʿAsākir includes *ḥadīths* that present ʿUthmān's conversion and relations with Muḥammad in a way clearly designed as a response to ʿAlī's prestige based on his early conversion and position as Muḥammad's nephew and son-in-law. Ibn ʿAsākir includes numerous *ḥadīth* discussing ʿUthmān's honorary title (*laqab*), Dhū al-Nūrayn, or the two lights. It is stated he was given this name because he married two daughters of the Prophet.[116] In fact, the reader is told, ʿUthmān is the only human to ever marry two daughters of a prophet.[117] If this was not enough, additional *ḥadīth* tell of Muḥammad's statement that there had never been a happier couple than ᶜUthmān and Ruqayyah, the first of his daughters he married to ᶜUthmān.[118] And not only did Muḥammad marry a second daughter to ᶜUthmān, he did so when he received a revelation telling him to do so.[119] As to ᶜAlī's early conversion, Ibn ᶜAsākir tells of ᶜUthmān's conversion along with Ṭalḥah b. ᶜUbaydallāh when they heard Muḥammad recite the Qurʾān. However, afterwards ᶜUthmān told Muḥammad that when they were in Syria they had had a disturbed sleep in which a caller (*munād*) called to them so they awoke and immediately set out for Mecca, where they heard Muḥammad. The account concludes: "ᶜUthmān's conversion to Islam was old (*qadīm*) before Muḥammad's entry into *dār al-arqam*."[120] ᶜUthmān's character and caliphate are defended through his close relationship with the Prophet and his early conversion.

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[114] Ibn ʿAsākir, 76-88.

[115] To make the point even more, Ibn ʿAsākir gives five variations of this *ḥadīth*. Ibn ʿAsākir, 92-3. Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣfahānī also includes *ḥadīths* about ʿUthmān writing the Qurʾān, but he does not explain what is meant by this. Abū Nuʿaym, 63.

[116] Ibn ʿAsākir, 8; Abū Nuʿaym, 62-3.

[117] This stands in marked contrast to the references in al-Yaʿqūbī and Ibn Aʿtham to ʿUthmān's nickname, *naʿthal*.

Ibn ᶜAsākir further develops ᶜUthmān's position vis-à-vis ᶜAlī and the other Companions through prophetic *ḥadīth* that predict and thereby endorse the order of the first four caliphs.[121] Ibn ᶜAsākir provides about twenty pages of *ḥadīth* that all focus on the virtue of the first three or four caliphs. These usually involve a scale descending from heaven and Muḥammad and each of the three (or four depending) caliphs being weighed.[122] The result is either they are equal or they are found virtuous in the order of their caliphates. Some of these also have Muḥammad rejecting this image and declaring they should not try to judge between them.[123] This is clearly a Sunnī position choosing to support the outcome of history and avoid harmful divisions.

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[118] Ibn ᶜAsākir, 17.

[119] Ibn ᶜAsākir, 33-36. He includes at least six variations of this *ḥadīth*.

[120] Ibn ᶜAsākir, 19. Ibn ᶜAsākir also includes the account which tells of the persecution ᶜUthmān received from his uncle after his conversion. Ibid., 22. That ᶜUthmān was an adult and subject to such pressures, contrasts with ᶜAlī's conversion at a young age when he was protected by Muḥammad. The contrast with ᶜAlī goes so far to include an account stating specifically that ᶜUthmān was not only the most handsome (*ajmal*) person, but more handsome than ᶜAlī. Ibn ᶜAsākir, 19.

[121] Many of these are transmitted on ᶜAlī's authority. Ibn ᶜAsākir further validates ᶜUthmān's caliphate by including *ḥadīth* in which Muḥammad legitimates the use of the *shūrā* and others in which he predicts *fitnah* in the days of ᶜUthmān. Ibn ᶜAsākir, 198-9. Thus there is no stain on ᶜUthmān's character or caliphate from either a conspiracy against ᶜAlī at the beginning or any errors or betrayals by ᶜUthmān at the end.

Ibn ʿAsākir eventually moves beyond *ḥadīths* to historical *akhbār* that also portray ʿAlī and the Companions supporting ʿUthmān. Unlike the Shīʿite portrayals of ʿĀʾishah and Ṭalḥah, according to Ibn ʿAsākir, it is "rabble" that continue to press for ʿUthmān's removal and murder. As a collective, we are told the Companions did not more actively defend ʿUthmān because they hated *fitnah* and did not think it would go so far as to kill ʿUthmān. However, they later regretted what they had allowed to happen.[124] Moreover, there are numerous accounts of prominent Companions, not just their sons, defending ʿUthmān.[125] But ʿUthmān forbade them from fighting and said the same to ʿAlī when he offered 500 defenders.[126] It is not surprising then that he also includes numerous accounts in which ʿAlī denied any involvement in the affair. Clearly the Companions could not have been behind ʿUthmān's murder when he includes an account stating ʿUthmān was in Paradise while those who killed him were in hell.[127]

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[122] Ibn ʿAsākir, 160-1. He also includes an account in which ʿUthmān is said to have two virtues ʿUmar and Abū Bakr lacked: patient endurance to the point of being unjustly killed and unifying the Qurʾān. Ibid., 244.
[123] Ibid., 103-122.
[124] Ibid., 362-3.
[125] Ibid., 407. Muʿāwiyah sent 4000 men from Syria and there are an additional 200 inside the house with ʿUthmān.
[126] Ibid., 403. I have not seen this account in any of the other narratives; it demonstrates the degree to which Ibn ʿAsākir wanted to insist upon ʿAlī's defense of ʿUthmān.

Ibn al-Jawzī emphasizes the unity among the Companions through his reliance on accounts by Sayf b. ʿUmar. In fact, Ibn al-Jawzī uses the *shūrā* account from Sayf that is not in al-Ṭabarī. In this version, Ibn ʿAwf went out and asked the people who they wanted as caliph and everyone said ʿUthmān. This account also describes Ibn ʿAwf having a dream in which he was told there was none in the community to compare with ʿUthmān.[128] There is no special designation of ʿAlī nor popular support for him. The narrative continues by claiming ʿAlī had only himself to blame for not being chosen. When Ibn ʿAwf gave ʿUthmān the oath of allegiance someone confronted him about abandoning ʿAlī; Ibn ʿAwf responded that he had no choice when ʿAlī said he would do his best rather than saying he would follow the *sunnah* of the Prophet and the first two caliphs.[129] Rather than a conspiracy then, ʿAlī himself is responsible for the caliphate passing him by. But if there is any question that ʿUthmān was not the best candidate, this is alleviated when Ibn al-Jawzī includes ʿUthmān's first sermon in which his piety is clearly evidenced and then his first letters to the governors in which he exhorts them to govern justly.[130]

Ibn al-Jawzī also portrays the Companions and ʿAlī defending ʿUthmān in a way that emphasizes the unity of the early Community. We are told the Companions stuck by ʿUthmān, but he ordered them to keep their swords sheathed and to depart.

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[127] Ibid., 388.
[128] Ibn al-Jawzī, vol. 4, 336. This appears to be a refutation of accounts found in other narratives in which ʿUmar has a dream encouraging him to appoint ʿAlī.
[129] Ibid.
[130] Ibid.

Moreover, when the band of besiegers saw that the "people returned to ʿUthmān they placed a guard on ʿAlī, Ṭalḥah and al-Zubayr and kept them from going to ʿUthmān so they each sent their sons to be with ʿUthmān."[131] Although other narratives portray that a guard was placed on ʿAlī or that key Companions sent their sons to defend ʿUthmān, this is the only time I have seen these three mentioned together by name in this situation.[132] But again ʿUthmān sent the sons home when he saw al-Ḥasan.[133] This further emphasizes the fact that ʿUthmān could have defended himself if he had chosen even as it emphasizes the support he received from ʿAlī and his sons. ʿUthmān only called for help when the besiegers cut off food and water, and then he sent for ʿAlī, Ṭalḥah, al-Zubayr, ʿĀʾishah and the wives of the Prophet.[134] This is consistent with the Sayf account in al-Ṭabarī; many narratives, however, only mention ʿAlī at this point. Ibn al-Jawzī intentionally links together those Companions who would later be divided by civil war.[135] His emphasis on unity and support is exactly opposite to the accounts found in al-Yaʿqūbī, al-Masʿūdī, and Ibn Aʿtham.

Portrayals of ʿUthmān

The Shīʿite Challenge

As discussed in the previous chapter, one way of judging ʿUthmān and his caliphate was through descriptions of when exactly things started to go wrong. According to al-Yaʿqūbī and Ibn Aʿtham, evil entered the community the day ᶜUthmān was elected caliph. Al-Yaᶜqūbī describes ᶜUthmān mounting the *minbar* to give his first sermon to the community, at which point he sat in the Prophet's chair. The narrator in the account points out that this was something that neither Abū Bakr nor ᶜUmar had dared to do and, "the people talked about this and one of them said, 'today evil has been born'."[136] ᶜUthmān's own actions confirm what al-Yaᶜqūbī has implied through the *shūrā*: the best person was not chosen. This view is reinforced in the description of ᶜUthmān's first sermon. He was unable to speak and said that he would try again when he could think of something to say and so descended from the *minbar.*[137] It is clearly not a very auspicious beginning for our protagonist and stands in marked contrast to al-Ṭabarī's account of ᶜUthmān's sermon encouraging the people to take care for the next life and promising to command the good and forbid evil.[138] Similarly, Ibn Aᶜtham concludes his account of the *shūrā* with the observation: "The caliphate was allotted to ᶜUthmān and differences and *fitnah* emerged in year 23" [the year of the *shūrā*].[139]

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[131] Ibn al-Jawzī, vol. 5, 53.

[132] On numerous occasions the Sayf accounts in al-Ṭabarī link together these three, but not in this particular scene. Rather, they describe Ṭalḥah and al-Zubayr staying in their houses when things turn more violent. Al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 209.

[133] Ibn al-Jawzī, vol., 5, 54.

[134] Ibid.; Al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 208.

[135] Ibid.

In terms of ᶜUthmān's abuses, al-Yaᶜqūbī and al-Masᶜūdī focus in particular on ᶜUthmān's use of the public treasury and government appointments as a means of rewarding his family and friends. While earlier narratives accuse ᶜUthmān of giving a fifth of the booty from the conquest of Egypt to Marwān b. al-Ḥakam, al-Yaᶜqūbī says he gave it to him as a dowry when he married his daughter to Marwān.[140] When ʿUthmān married off another daughter he ordered the governor of Basra to pay the dowry of 60,000 dirhams from the treasury in Basra.[141] Al-Yaʿqūbī points out that ʿUthmān expanded the mosque in Medina in year twenty-six and that he had to tear down houses to do so, angering the people in the process.[142] Furthermore, ʿUthmān put the cost on the treasury. Al-Masʿūdī's section on ʿUthmān's *sīrah* focuses on how he favored his family and appointed them to key government posts and gave them money from the public treasury.[143] We are told that al-Zubayr, Ṭalḥah, and Ibn ʿAwf used this money to enlarge their houses.[144] While al-Yaʿqūbī emphasizes the youth of ʿUthmān's appointments,[145] al-Masʿūdī goes so far as to claim Muḥammad had described al-Walīd as one of the people of hell.[146]

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[136] Al-Yaᶜqūbī, 163.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 3, transmitted by Sayf b. ᶜUmar and condensed in Ibn al-Jawzī, vol. 4, 336; al-Balādhurī also records a positive impression of ᶜUthmān's first sermon, transmitted by al-Wāqidī, 41-42.
[139] Ibn Aᶜtham, 333.

The abusive nature of ʿUthmān's rule and his governors comes through in Ibn Aʿtham as well. Ibn Aʿtham tells of ʿUthmān calling his governors to Medina when the complaints against them increased.[147] ʿUthmān sought and received their advice. A similar account is recorded in al-Ṭabarī, but Ibn Aʿtham's narrative differs in slight, yet significant ways. In al-Ṭabarī ʿUthmān was urged to send the people on jihād in order to distract them, and to keep them on campaign until they "act humbly" before him.[148] He continues by stating, "In this way every one of them will be concerned only about himself, about the saddle sores of his pack animal, and about on the lice on his scalp."[149] But in Ibn Aʿtham's narrative, ʿUthmān was told he needs to keep them busy with conquests and war against their enemies "until not one of them returns, and if he returns to his camp, he will be concerned with himself and not attend to the disgraceful conduct (*ʿaib*) of the commanders (*umarāʾ*)."[150] Similarly, in al-Ṭabarī, one of the governors told ʿUthmān the people are greedy and if he gives them some of the wealth, "their hearts will incline towards [him]."[151] In contrast, in Ibn Aʿtham, ʿUthmān was told the people are angry and if he pays them (*idfaʿ*) their rights, then he would receive from them his own rights in full.[152] Finally, in al-Ṭabarī, Muʿāwiyah advised ʿUthmān to send back his governors "on condition that they administer their provinces with care."[153] Compare this with Muʿāwiyah's advice in Ibn Aʿtham:

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[140] Al-Yaʿqūbī, 165.
[141] Ibid., 168. The treasurer refused and when ʿUthmān confronted him telling him he is his, i.e. ʿUthmān's treausurer, the man responded that he was the treasurer for the Muslims. He threw the keys and ʿUthmān gave them to someone else. Ibid., 169.
[142] Ibid., 164. This is the same as the al-Wāqidī report in al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 15. Although there ʿUthmān defended his actions saying they would not have behaved that way when ʿUmar did similar things. Moreover, it is contrary to the very positive portrayals of this act found in the *ḥadīths* recorded in al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Ibn Khayyāṭ, al-Balādhurī, and later Sunnī sources.
[143] Al-Masʿūdī, 433.
[144] Ibid., 434.
[145] Al-Yaʿqūbī, 166.
[146] Al-Masʿūdī., 435. They both elaborate on al-Walid's drunkenness and its consequences.
[147] Ibn Aʿtham. *Kitāb al-futūḥ*, part II, pg. 178.

> O Commander of the Faithful, indeed you have gathered us and told us of the multiplying complaints about us and you have put us over (*mallakatanā*) the necks of the people and made us like tent pegs in the ground. So take from each one of us from what is appointed from his work until we meet all your requirements before him and there will not be anyone who complains or holds anything against you.[154]

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[148] Al-Ṭabarī, 136. The accounts also differ in regards to who gave what advice.
[149] Al-Ṭabarī, 136.
[150] Ibn Aʿtham, 179.
[151] Al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 136.
[152] Ibn Aʿtham, 179.
[153] Al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 137.
[154] Ibn Aʿtham, 179. The phrase, "on the necks of the people" appears often in Persian inspired guidelines for rulers.

ʿUthmān decided to listen to Muʿāwiyah's advice.[155] He sent the governors back to their "countries" commissioning them and warning them against complaints. But then "nothing increased (*yazdādū*) for the people except harshness (*ghilẓah*) and oppression in their judgments and abandoning the *sunnah*."[156] In this account most of the opprobrium is directed at ʿUthmān's governors, but Ibn Aʿtham's narrative continues and reveals ʿUthmān to be just as harsh and unjust.[157]

Miskawayh

Miskawayh relies on the Sayf accounts found in al-Ṭabarī which remove any blame from ʿUthmān for the deteriorating state of the community. In this way Miskawayh is able to focus on ʿUthmān's religious duties and any criticisms remain extremely vague and brief. We are told that a "group of Muslims" were complaining about ʿUthmān and had concluded he had done "grave misdeeds," but the reader is not told what these are.[158] We know that al-Walīd was drunk in the pulpit, but there is no mention of his dubious appointment or his relationship to ʿUthmān. Moreover, when ʿUthmān found out about it he had al-Walīd brought to Medina and whipped, the appropriate *ḥadd* punishment.[159] Thus we find ʿUthmān exercising one of the caliph's few remaining responsibilities at the time of Miskawayh.

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[155] Later Ṭalḥah and al-Zubayr came to ʿUthmān and confront him with with a list of abuses including going against ʿUmar's stipulation that he not appoint members of his own tribe, the Banū Muʿayt and that he had placed them on the necks of the people. They also accused him of exiling Companions of the Prophet and appointing family members as governors. Ibn Aʿtham, 186-7. In Ibn Aʿtham's narrative Muʿāwiyah has a more prominent role. It is he who encourages ʿUthmān to punish anyone who speaks out against him. He also stands by ʿUthmān, whereas in al-Ṭabarī he is shown to be afraid of going against the Companions.

[156] Ibid., 179.

[157] Ibn Aʿtham includes a lengthy account of the letters from Kufa that also appear in al-Balādhurī. In Ibn Aʿtham, Ibn Kaʿb criticizes ʿUthmān without praising Qur'ān reciters. Ibn Aʿtham also makes ʿUthmān out to be even more of a tyrant for after the letter is written, the Kufans could decide who to choose as a messenger, since ʿUthmān would certainly beat, kill, or exile whoever delivered such a message. Ibn Aʿtham, 181. Even though ʿUthmān later had a change of heart and feared he was too harsh with Ibn Ka'b, Ibn Aʿtham does not record Kaʿb actually forgiving ʿUthmān as he does in al-Balādhurī. Ibn Aʿtham, 187-8. His narrative includes the version of the letter that orders the Egyptian governor to crucify them and tie them to palm trees until they drown in their own blood. Moreover, after Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr read the letter he and those with him returned to Medina and "then he gathered the Companions of the Prophet and read them the letter and told them of the story of the letter so that not one person remained in Medina who was not furious with ʿUthmān." Ibid., 212.

[158] Miskawayh, *Tajārib al-umam*, 271.

That ʿUthmān was not to blame for the rising discontent is further illustrated when he called his governors together for counsel. They pointed out the dissidents would never be able to unify against him and advised him to either keep the people busy with jihād or to give them money – which was all they really wanted. ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ was the only one who suggested ʿUthmān had done anything wrong when he told him that he had done what the people did not like and appointed men from the Banū Umayyah and so he should remove himself.[160] But ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ is a dubious character to begin with and after the fact he came back to ʿUthmān and said he only said those things so it would get back to the people and they would think ʿAmr was on their side, implying he could then be a better spy for ʿUthmān. This compromised and circumstantial reference to ʿUthmān's appointment of relatives is the only specific criticism of ʿUthmān. In contrast, the Kufans are described rejecting one governor after another without reason, while ʿUthmān responded to their requests because he did not want to give them any excuse against him.[161]

Rather than a build-up of legitimate grievances, the revolt against ʿUthmān is portrayed in Miskawayh as a conflagration developing in the year thirty-five. He opens the year, as does al-Ṭabarī, with the account by Sayf b. ʿUmar about the growing Sabāʾiyyah heresy.[162] This is the only explanation he gives for the growing discontent in the provinces. In this way Miskawayh removes any political responsibility from ʿUthmān while also suggesting that religious divisions are the greatest threat to the caliphate. Abū Nuʿaym and Ibn ʿAsākir further develop the primarily religious image of the caliph, while Ibn al-Jawzī restores some of ʿUthmān's political responsibilities.

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[159] When al-Māwardī legitimates the division of authority as Sunnī political theory, ensuring the *ḥadd* punishment as a part of religious law remains as one of the few responsibilities of the caliph.
[160] Al-Ṭabarī says, "behave justly."
[161] Miskawayh, *Tajārib al-umam*, 276.

The Sunnī Reaction

Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣfahānī reflects the trend in biographical dictionaries that replaced historical *akhbār* with prophetic *ḥadīths*. In this way, the narrator could portray an overwhelmingly positive picture that focused on the subject's close relations with the Prophet. In ʿUthmān's case it also helps to avoid the controversial aspects of his caliphate. Abū Nuʿaym begins his entry on ʿUthmān with ʿUthmān's name, appearance, *kunya*, children, age, the dates of his reign, etc.[163] He gives no information about the *shūrā* or anything to do with ʿUthmān's government policies, positive or negative. We hear nothing about who he appointed as governors for example. Instead of his government policies we are presented with a section sub-headed "it is known that he was among those who prayed towards both *qiblas* (Jerusalem and Mecca), went on both *hijras*, was called *Dhū al-Nūrayn*, and was murdered unjustly (*maẓlūman*)."[164] He then provides a number of frequently seen brief Traditions (a few lines each) addressing ʿUthmān's relation with the Prophet and early conversion.[165] All of these points are further developed by Ibn ʿAsākir.

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[162] Ibid.

[163] Abū Nuʿaym, 61. Although he was a Shafiʿī, he begins his entry with a tradition by Ibn Ḥanbal. Perhaps he was he trying to placate the even more aggressively traditionist Ḥanbalites.

In addition to *ḥadīths* that defend ʿUthmān in general, or in relation to ʿAlī, Ibn ʿAsākir uses them to systematically address accusations against ʿUthmān. For example he gives pages of *ḥadīths* about ʿUthmān supplying Muḥammad's army from his own money; how much he spent (also from his own money) when he bought the well of Rūmah and bought land to enlarge the mosque. All these argue against his misuse of public money and also speak of the virtue of generosity.[166] More specifically, these *ḥadīths* record Muḥammad promising ʿUthmān Paradise for buying the well or that providing for the army will wipe out all future sins.[167] He also (indirectly) addresses the accusation about destroying the Qur'ān. Ibn ʿAsākir includes several pages of *ḥadīths* that all state ʿUthmān "gathered" the Qur'ān as a commitment (*ʿahd*) to Muḥammad and that ʿUthmān was the "seal of the Qurʾān."[168] As to ʿUthmān's government appointments, Ibn ʿAsākir records ʿUthmān quoting a *ḥadīth* in which Muḥammad stated his preference for the Umayyads and the Quraysh and said he would give them the keys to Paradise if he had them.[169]

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[164] Abū Nuʿaym, 61-2. These are clearly designed to emphasize ʿUthmān's early conversion, close relations with Muḥammad, and consequently, his right to the caliphate.

[165] Abū Nuʿaym includes a tradition from Ibn Ḥanbal that ʿUthmān's hand was the first to write the Qur'ān and with his murder the sword of *fitnah* has been unsheathed upon the community and it will not be sheathed again. Ibid., 63. Also that Muḥammad gave ʿUthmān the recognition of a participant of Badr and gave him the *bayʿa* of *Riḍwān* by putting one hand over the other. Ibid., 163. The imagery and significance of this is easily apprehended.

[166] After *ḥadīth*, Ibn ʿAsākir moves on to Qur'anic verses that apply or refer to ʿUthmān. One states God blessed ʿUthmān with a fortune and implies he used it for the good of the *ummah*. Q 16:75-76. Ibid., 210-212. Ibn ʿAsākir even finds *akhbār* from unlikely sources to support this point. For example, an account based on Muḥammad b. Isḥāq states ʿUthmān was the most generous after Muḥammad because he was generous with his possessions with Muḥammad and generous in spirit with his relations. Ibid., 223.

[167] In response to the accusation that ʿUthmān altered the number of times he knelt in prayer on the hajj, Ibn ʿAsākir includes several accounts that say it was "evil" to do four prostrations, but then three more quote Muḥammad saying he could do that if near family and village – which ʿUthmān was. Ibid., 249-50.

Since ʿUthmān did nothing to deserve the revolt against him, Ibn ʿAsākir explains it through *ḥadīths* in which Muḥammad predicted *fitnah* in the days of ʿUthmān. The *ḥadīth* become even more explicit regarding the *fitnah* when Muḥammad told ʿUthmān that some will try to remove the shirt (of authority) placed upon him and that he must not do this. Some variations of the *ḥadīth* even state ʿUthmān will not go to Paradise if he gives in to their demands and removes the shirt.[170] Ibn ʿAkākir also claims the Qurʾanic verses 16:75-76 were revealed about ʿUthmān. These verses state the man who uses his wealth for good and commands justice is more praiseworthy than the man who has no wealth or power.[171] After validating ʿUthmān and his caliphate through *ḥadīth* and the Qurʾān, Ibn ʿAsākir sets about "rewriting" the reasons for the revolt against him. He selects accounts that praise ʿUthmān and his caliphate. Ibn ʿAsākir gives several accounts of ʿUthmān's first and last sermon all about loving God, rejecting this world and stating that God has unified the community and made them brothers.[172] He also includes an account in which al-Ḥasan stated ʿUthmān ruled for twelve years and no one held anything against his government until "sinners" came and "duped" the Medinese in his matter.[173] Ibn ʿAsākir continues to intersperse *akhbār*, usually from Sayf b. ʿUmar, and *ḥadīths* that defend ʿUthmān's actions and character. Ibn al-Jawzī is more willing to mention the criticisms against ʿUthmān, but also to include his defenses.

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[168] Ibid., 170-1. Another account records ʿAlī saying he would have done the same if ʿUthmān had not. Ibid., 238.

[169] Ibid., 246. There is also an account later in which ʿUthmān is blamed for favoring his relatives and the band would not leave till he stepped down. But Ibn ʿAsākir determines this account to be "incorrect." Ibid., 367,8.

[170] Ibid., 173,4.

[171] Ibid., 210-12.

[172] Ibid., 230-244.

In terms of the reasons for the revolt, Ibn al-Jawzī's account begins, as in al-Ṭabarī: "Those who were alienated from ʿUthmān wrote to one another, planning to gather together in order to discuss with him [those matters] concerning which they were angry at him and to review the actions of ʿUthmān."[174] They agreed to send a man to speak to him and inform him of his "blameworthy innovations *(aḥdāth)*."[175] The messenger told ʿUthmān: "A body of Muslims have met together and examined your actions, and they find that you have committed grave misdeeds."[176] However, when there is any elaboration later in the narrative on what these innovations may have been, namely changing the prayer and fencing in pasture land, ʿUthmān has a quick and apparently legitimate response.[177] Consequently the main reason for the revolt against ʿUthmān, not surprisingly, is the nefarious influence of Ibn Sabāʾ, who was "leading the people astray."[178] Whereas at this point Miskawayh switches to the al-Wāqidī accounts in al-Ṭabarī, Ibn al-Jawzī continues to rely on Sayf's version of the siege and murder that emphasizes ʿUthmān's piety and the attackers' aggression.

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[173] Ibid., 220.

[174] Ibn al-Jawzī, vol. 5, 44.

[175] Ibid.

[176] Ibid. Al-Ṭabarī continues: "so fear almighty God; turn to Him in repentance and refrain from (such acts)." Al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 136.

[177] Ibid., 50.

[178] Ibid., 49. He does not mention, however, the Shīʿite nature of the heresy.

Portrayals of the Community and the Caliphate

It is in the confrontations between ʿUthmān and his critics that authors could convey their views on the office of the caliphate and the unity of the community. Not surprisingly, al-Yaʿqūbī and al-Masʿūdī have very little to say on either point.[179] Ibn Aʿtham, on the other hand, includes most of the defenses for ʿUthmān grounded in the unity of the community. This is consistent with his account of the *shūrā* as well in which ʿAlī is portrayed as deferring his rights for the sake of unity. But Ibn Aʿtham also raises some concerns as to who is the rebel when it comes to unjust rulers. The issues of caliphal authority and communal unity are most fully developed by Miskawayh and Ibn ʿAsākir.

The Shīʿite Challenge

Ibn Aʿtham includes most of ʿUthmān's defenses based on unity, even as he undermines many of them. For example, ʿUthmān told his besiegers that they were perfectly aware of his virtues and that he was among the distinguished Companions of the Prophet. He also said that if they killed him then the sword of God would be unsheathed against them and would continue until the Day of Judgment.[180] Although this appears to be a strong defense for ʿUthmān -- and any ruler -- ʿUthmān concluded his statement by giving them the keys to the treasury and telling them to take what they wanted for the garrison towns and to do as they liked.[181] This undermines the principles undergirding his position. Similarly, when Zayd b. Thābit defended

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[179] Al-Yaʿqūbī makes no mention of any appeals to unity, and Masʿūdī mentions only once the defense that it is only right to kill a Muslim for one of three reasons, al-Masʿūdī, 441.
[180] Ibn Aʿtham, 222.
[181] Ibid., 223.

ʿUthmān's position he quoted the Qurʾān: "As for those who have created schisms in their religion (*dīnihim*), and formed different sects (*shiyaʿan*), you have no concern with them. Their affair is with God."[182] But the people called out: "Zayd, verily ʿUthmān has bought you off with the money of widowers which is the only reason you are supporting him."[183] Finally, when ʿAbdallāh b. Salām warned them of God's unsheathed sword and stated: "By God, a prophet has not been killed without 70,000 from his community being killed with him as a punishment against them. Nor has a caliph been killed after him without 35,000 being killed with him."[184] The band responded by crying out: "you lied, you Jew!"[185] Ibn Aʿtham appears to be wrestling with the tension between obedience, unity, and justice.

Ibn Aʿtham may also have been engaging in a more subtle legal debate through his description of ʿUthmān and his besiegers. For example, he entitles a section: "mention of the return of the Egyptians to war against (*muḥārabah*) ʿUthmān after they found the letter."[186] According to Khaled Abou El Fadl this term refers specifically to fighting bandits and highway robbers. The term is taken from the *ḥirāba* verse which legitimizes harsh punishments for those who spread mischief in the land.[187] It is possible that Ibn Aʿtham is arguing ʿUthmān was the one threatening the community through his behavior, thereby legitimating the use of force against him.[188] Moreover, ʿUthmān is described writing to his governors for support, stating: "In the name of God the merciful and compassionate, verily the people of *al-baghā*, insolence, and ignorance and enemies from the Kufans, Egyptians and Medinese have surrounded me in my house and will not be satisfied with anything short of killing me or removing the shirt [of authority] my Lord placed upon me."[189] Was ʿUthmān in his own words giving his opponents greater legal rights by pronouncing them rebels who are distinguished from bandits because their grievances are against religious innovations or political abuses?

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[182] Ibid., 222-3; Q 6:159.
[183] Ibid. I have not seen this rebuttal in other accounts.
[184] Ibid., 224.
[185] Ibid. It is also worth noting that in this account ʿAbdallāh repeatedly refers to ʿUthmān as "this shaykh." The same accusation of being a Jew appears in al-Balādhurī.
[186] Ibid., 211.
[187] Abou El Fadl, *Rebellion & Violence*, 47. Q 5:33-34.

Miskawayh

Miskawayh's concern with the caliphate and the unity of the community comes through in the way he describes ʿUthmān's authority. As in the narrative of ʿUthmān's caliphate, Miskawayh edits the confrontations between ʿUthmān and his critics in such a way as to limit any political responsibility or criticism. At the same time he holds up ʿUthmān and the caliph as important for religious unity. We can see this in the way he edits the confrontation between ʿAlī and ʿUthmān. In al-Ṭabarī, ʿAlī quoted a prophetic *ḥadīth* stating the unjust imām would bring about the Day of Judgment and that he would be cast into hell.[190] ʿAlī then continued by warning ʿUthmān lest he be the murdered unjust imām of the community. Miskawayh removes this part of the dialogue while retaining the part in which ʿAlī recalled that an imām would be killed and the result would be factionalism and confusion. ʿAlī states: "Indeed it is said that an imām will be killed in this community, and that bloody strife will be loosed upon it until the Day of Resurrection, and its affairs will become hopelessly entangled. (God) will leave them as sects (*shiyaʿ*), and they will not see the truth due to the great height of falsehood. They will toss therein like waves and wander in confusion."[191] This portion says nothing about ʿUthmān's actions or responsibility for what is to come; the focus is on the consequence not the cause of ʿUthmān's death.

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[188] This might be stretching the evidence, but it is intriguing that when ʿUthmān wrote to his governors for help it was because he "despairs of his subjects (*raʿiyyah*)." Ibn Aʿtham, 217. Does this mean it is the subjects who have revolted against him or abandoned him? If it is the former, then they are not being described as those who have put themselves outside the community by their actions.
[189] Ibn Aʿtham, 217.
[190] Al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 142.

Miskawayh's editing out of the first part of this confrontation may reflect a more secular or practical outlook and application of history. Miskawayh was concerned with immediate consequences – schism – and not with eternal damnation.[192] Vague references to ʿUthmān's religious responsibilities also appear in the meeting between ʿUthmān and his governors in which Miskawayh waters down their counsel. Whereas in al-Ṭabarī, ʿUthmān is warned for being "lenient and lax," Miskawayh only includes the warning that he needs to follow in the footsteps of ʿUmar.[193] Nor does Miskawayh include the subsequent list of ʿUthmān's abuses of power or his defense.[194] ʿUthmān appears stripped of all political responsibility, positive or negative.[195]

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[191] Ibid; Miskawayh, *Tajārib al-umam*, 274.

[192] Miskawayh, *Tajārib al-umam*, 274.

[193] Ibid., 272. Al-Ṭabarī has the more developed description of what this means: "You have increased their stipends beyond the levels set by ʿUmar. . . follow the path of your two predecessors, showing severity and leniency according to the situation. Severity is the right policy for the man who constantly does evil to the people, while leniency is appropriate for one who deals with the people in good faith. However, you have shown leniency without distinction." Al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 150.

ʿUthmān only takes any responsibility for the situation once the siege has actually begun. Significantly, at this point Miskawayh switches from relying primarily on accounts by Sayf b. ʿUmar to al-Wāqidī's narrative of the siege and murder. In this way he portrays ʿUthmān as participating in various schemes that led to his own death. Miskawayh includes two accounts of the letter ʿUthmān supposedly wrote to his governor in Egypt. In both accounts of the letter incident, the besiegers stated the letter made ʿUthmān's blood lawful.[196] Even though ʿUthmān denied any knowledge of it and demanded two witnesses, they responded that if he was lying his blood was lawful and even if he was not, the incident showed his "weakness and he should remove himself from the authority."[197] In the other account ʿUthmān responded that he would not remove a shirt of authority and that he had repented. They acknowledged his repentance, but then pointed out he had returned to the same behavior countless times so they had no choice but to remove and replace him.[198] Only at this point do we find ʿUthmān's actions coming into play and even so the result is to remove him not to kill him. Moreover, the grievances appear to be plotting, scheming, and deceiving others – all things which were no doubt a part of the caliphs' efforts to regain some authority under the Būyids.

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[194] He cuts out another list of abuses and defenses in Sayf's account of ʿUthmān's confrontation with the first group of besiegers. Al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 155; Miskawayh, *Tajārib al-umam*, 279.

[195] Miskawayh, *Tajārib al-umam*, 277. In the following report Muʿāwiyah urged ʿUthmān to come with him to Syria, but ʿUthmān refused to leave the neighborhood of the Prophet or support the army that Muʿāwiyah offered to send. Muʿāwiyah said he would get himself killed and ʿUthmān responded that God was sufficient. Ibid., 278.

[196] Ibid., 283.

[197] Ibid., 282; al-Ṭabarī 168. The account does conclude, "In the end they blamed the misunderstanding on an Umayyad plot." Ibid. In the other account they entered the house and confronted ʿUthmān. Ibid., 289.

[198] Ibid., 289.

The Sunnī Reaction

Ibn ʿAsākir's narrative may also reflect contemporary relations between the rulers and those writing history. He begins by defending ʿUthmān, his justice and special relationship with Muḥammad. He defends ʿUthmān specifically by citing the verse: "To those who deny the signs of God, and slay the apostles (prophets) unjustly, and slay the upholders of justice, give news of painful punishment."[199] Ibn ʿAsākir's account includes a commentary that strengthens the application of this verse to ʿUthmān as one who upholds justice and was killed unjustly. Ibn ʿAbbas states that "those in authority" refers to those who are just and like ʿUthmān.[200] Ibn ʿAsākir removed any evidence that ʿUthmān was anything but a just imām.

In the account of the confrontation between ʿAlī and ʿUthmān, Ibn ʿAsākir includes the first part in which ʿUthmān urged ʿAlī to support him by reminding him of their ties as relatives and Companions. Rather than ʿAlī's response about how ʿUthmān had changed or that he may be the murdered unjust imām, Ibn ʿAsākir simply states this is a long account and more words were spoken than he has recorded.[201] Even when there are suggestions of ʿUthmān's injustice, such as the letter to the Egyptian governor, Ibn ʿAsākir includes six variations of the response that it is only lawful to kill a Muslim for one of three reasons. ʿUthmān also defended himself with the argument we have seen elsewhere in which he points out that God must have known what would happen when ʿUthmān became caliph.[202] Ibn ʿAsākir includes additional references to obeying the ruler regardless of whether he is just, pious, or a Companion.

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[199] Q 3:21.
[200] I have only seen this gloss of the verse in Ibn Abī Bakr's *Al-Tamhīd wa'l-bayān fī maqtal al-shahīd ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān* that will be discussed in the following chapter.
[201] Ibn ʿAsākir, 369.

Ibn ʿAsākir presents numerous accounts that defend the authority of the ruler -- caliph and sulṭān -- and the unity of the community not against rebels or those complaining of injustice, but against those who would dare to hold the Qurʾān over the rulers. Ibn ʿAsākir includes several variations of the account in which ʿAbdallah b. Salām went out and warned the besiegers. These begin with him telling them not to kill ʿUthmān or to criticize him (*istaʿtibūhu*). He continued by telling them when a community kills its prophet it will not be restored until the blood of 70,000 is shed and when it sheds the blood of its caliph, it will not be restored until the blood of 40,000 is shed. He continues, "And a community (*ummah*) has not been destroyed except when they raised the Qurʾān against the ruler (*sulṭān*)."[203] This is a quite remarkable assertion even without the anachronistic use of the title sulṭān and association with the battle of Siffīn.[204]

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[202] Ibid., 353. Ibn ʿAsākir also includes a much less common response from ʿUthmān; he reminds them that Muḥammad said ʿUthmān would be his boon companion in Paradise. Ibid., 346.

[203] Ibid., 354-6. These account also include ʿAlī defending ʿAbdallāh to the band as a righteous man (*ṣāliḥ*), very different from Ibn Aʿtham's account denouncing him as a Jew. These accounts appear in al-Dhahabī as well.

[204] In the Battle of Siffīn between ʿAlī and Muʿāwiyah a group placed their Qurʾāns on the end of their spears and demanded arbitration based on the Qurʾān. ʿAlī agreed to this and lost the military advantage. A group of his supporters also abandoned him declaring he forfeited his right to the caliphate by agreeing to arbitration. This group became the *Khawārij* or more commonly, Khārijites from the Arabic "to go out." The following account in fact points out that the *Khawārij* did raise the Qurʾān against the sulṭān. Ibid., 357.

Not only does Ibn ʿAsākir's narrative make stronger assertions against confronting the caliph in general, he also emphasizes the significance of the revolt against ʿUthmān in particular. He includes numerous accounts not only stating the death of ʿUthmān had unsheathed the sword of *fitnah* upon the community, but that it would not be re-sheathed until the Day of Judgment and that the first *fitnah* was the murder of ʿUthmān and the last would be the coming of the anti-Christ.[205] These accounts elevate the symbolic significance of the revolt against ʿUthmān as ushering in a permanent period of chaos and bloodshed.

In contrast to the insignificant caliph in Miskawayh or the idealized caliph in Ibn ʿAsākir, Ibn al-Jawzī presents an ideal, real ruler. ʿUthmān had authority, misused it, but should have been obeyed anyway. The difference between him and Ibn ʿAsākir may reflect the fact that Ibn ʿAsākir was writing for the sulṭān, Nūr al-Dīn, to bolster Sunnī religiosity, while Ibn al-Jawzī was working for the ʿAbbāsid court to assert the rights of the caliph and to unite all Muslims under the caliph. One place we see the difference in perspective is once again in the confrontation between ʿUthmān and ʿAlī. Ibn al-Jawzī naturally removes the more contentious part about a murdered unjust imām. What remains is ʿAlī first stating that ʿAlī is no better than ʿUthmān, but then warning him that he is favoring his family and being too lenient with Muʿāwiyah. ʿUthmān defended himself and then addressed the people saying he had done nothing that ʿUmar did not do and that ʿUmar crushed them with his foot, struck them with his hand, and cursed them with his tongue. They are complaining about ʿUthmān because of his leniency with them; his mistake has been that he has refrained his hand and tongue from them. This seems to defend ʿUthmān's policy record, but then the account concludes with ʿUthmān stating: "And can I not do what I want with the surplus? For why else did I become imām?"[206] This seems quite different from the ʿUthmān in Ibn ʿAsākir's narrative who was repeatedly praised for his generosity and that he used his own wealth primarily for the good of the community. In this account not only ʿUthmān, but ʿUmar as well, are portrayed in a way that defends the caliph regardless of his tendencies towards one extreme or another. Moreover, it encourages taking a firm hand and that the caliph can do as he likes. Rather than idealizing the *Rāshidūn* Caliphs as a source of legitimacy for the contemporary caliphate, Ibn al-Jawzī chooses to legitimate current caliphal liberties by asserting the *Rāshidūn* behaved in a similar fashion.

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[205] Ibid.

Portrayals of the Siege and Murder

Tayeb El-Hibri asserts in his analysis of the regicide of the ʿAbbāsid Caliph al-Amīn, that narrators could condemn or redeem al-Amīn by how they portrayed his final days. I would add ʿUthmān to El-Hibri's comparison between al-Amīn and Richard II, in which El-Hibri states: "Both start out being accused of abuse of power, of misgovernment, of surrounding themselves with men of inferior birth who flatter them and lead them to make wrong decisions. And in the end both suffer humiliating ends which instill in them a sense of wisdom, and mark their spiritual rebirth."[207]

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[206] Ibn al-Jawzī, vol. 5, 45.
[207] El-Hibri, *Reinterpreting*, 83.

What stands out in the texts under discussion here is the marked difference between the Sunnī and Shīʿite efforts to redeem ʿUthmān through his murder. The three "Shīʿite" sources and Miskawayh present a remarkably brisk account while our three Sunnī sources elaborate upon references to ʿUthmān's personal piety and patient suffering; in their hands ʿUthmān becomes a genuine martyr choosing death for the sake of the community.

The Shīʿite Challenge

Al-Yaʿqūbī, Ibn Aʿtham, and al-Masʿūdī make no reference to signs of ʿUthmān's personal piety during the siege and murder, even as they do not elaborate upon the attackers' greed or aggression. There is no mention of ʿUthmān reading the Qurʾān, praying, or fasting. Nor is there any reference to ʿUthmān's vision that he would breakfast with Muḥammad. Al-Yaʿqūbī and al-Masʿūdī do not even describe ʿUthmān urging his supporters not to fight. Rather in al-Masʿūdī's text they are busy fighting at the door to the house when Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr and others are able to slip in and kill ʿUthmān.[208] Ibn Aʿtham makes a point of stating: "Then Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr entered for it was not a lie that he came to ʿUthmān."[209] According to him, Muḥammad only left after he had stabbed ʿUthmān in the head. Ibn Aʿtham does include details about ʿUthmān's blood dripping on the Qurʾān, but he also says, only "God knows."[210] Moreover, he describes ʿUthmān taking up the Qurʾān only when Muḥammad entered. Not only is there little to redeem ʿUthmān personally, these accounts fail to mention the brutality of the assault or that the attackers then pillaged his house and the treasury and molested his wives. Instead al-Yaʿqūbī chooses to emphasize the fact that no-one wanted to pray for or bury ʿUthmān and that finally, after three days, ʿUthmān was buried clandestinely and not in the main cemetery.[211] These narratives provide nothing that could point to ʿUthmān's final forgiveness and redemption.

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[208] Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr actually leaves before it comes to blows.
[209] Ibn Aʿtham, 235.
[210] Ibid.

Miskawayh

Miskawayh gives an even shorter account of ʿUthmān's murder and this only after he has presented it as being ʿUthmān's own fault for listening to bad counsel and taking up arms against the besiegers. Miskawayh includes the lengthy accounts in al-Ṭabarī which describe ʿUthmān going back and forth between ʿAlī's advice and Marwān's.[212] When ʿAlī negotiated a three day reprieve for him, ʿUthmān listened to Marwān and used this time to gather weapons.[213] It was someone in ʿUthmān's camp who initiated the violence by throwing down a rock that killed one of the besiegers. It is only when ʿUthmān refused to turn the man over to the besiegers that they burned their way into the house. Although ʿUthmān gathered his companions and told them to leave since the band is only after him, Marwān refused and rushed out to attack and a fight ensued. Miskawayh states, "Those who were in the house were routed and they departed fleeing into the streets of Medina."[214] I have not seen this description in any other narrative. More startling still is the fact that Miskawayh gives no details of the murder itself and states simply: "ʿUthmān was reached and so he was killed before the help from the garrison towns arrived."[215] The lack of sympathy for ʿUthmān and the implication that the besiegers originally had no intention of killing him may have been influenced by the current relations between the Būyids and the ʿAbbāsid caliphs. The Būyids themselves had unceremoniously removed the caliph. Yet the Būyids' own legitimacy as guardians of the caliph required them to assert this act did not fundamentally threaten the integrity of the community.

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[211] Al-Yaʿqūbī, 176. Al-Masʿūdī includes the account of ʿAlī going crazy with grief when he heard of ʿUthmān's murder and yelling at his sons for not defending him. But the account also points out that it was ʿUthmān's own fault for not turning over Marwān. Al-Masʿūdī, 441. Ibn Aʿtham mentions Nā'ilah's rebuke, 237.

[212] Miskawayh, *Tajārib al-umam*, 283-6.

[213] ʿUthmān asked Muʿāwiyah to send and army and he did not do it because he did not want to be seen to be at odds with the Companions of the Prophet. Ibid., 287.

The Sunnī Reaction

Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣfahānī gives several accounts of ʿUthmān's murder, but they all give little detail and instead focus on Qurʾanic and prophetic defenses for ʿUthmān. There does not appear to be any effort on Abū Nuʿaym's part to argue for who killed ʿUthmān. He gives several variant accounts without any editorial comment on which is more reliable.[216] Virtually every account, however, concludes by pointing out his blood fell on the verse "God will suffice you over them."[217] In contrast to the Shīʿite narratives, Abū Nuʿaym records individuals volunteering to pray over ʿUthmān in order to receive a blessing since God and the Angels would also pray over him.[218]

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[214] Ibid., 289.

[215] Ibid., 290.

[216] Abū Nuʿaym, 66-8. Some accounts describe Muḥamamad b. Abī Bakr leaving after ʿUthmān confronts him, while others state he then struck ʿUthmān with a spear in anger. He also includes an account which acknowledges the disagreement over who killed him: perhaps an anonymous Egyptian, or "the Egyptians," or Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr. Ibid., 66.

[217] Q 2:137.

[218] Abū Nuʿaym, 68.

Abū Nuʿaym relies on additional *ḥadīth* to provide the closing context for his narrative.[219] The last entry is ʿUthmān's defense that it is only legitimate to kill a Muslim for one of three reasons. This ends all debate.

In fact all debate and controversy has been removed from his entire biography of ʿUthmān. We have NO idea why anyone would want to kill ʿUthmān. ʿUthmān is praised through his early conversion and *ḥadīth* from the Prophet, but little in terms of his own actions. There is nothing about enlarging the mosque, buying the well or supplying the Prophet's army. Authority and defense are found in Muḥammad rather than any actions by ʿUthmān.[220] Nor do we hear of any actions against or criticisms of ʿUthmān. Purified pictures of the Companions as well as the grounding of authority and all argument in traditions, primarily prophetic *ḥadīth*, are all aspects of what has been described as the Sunnī revival of the eleventh century. But rather than seeing this as the beginning of narrative stagnation and the end of debate, Abū Nuʿaym and others represent an active authorial process of selecting, arranging and editing sources in order to produce a narrative that is a direct response to the political and religious needs of the day.

After refuting all possible explanations for grievances against ʿUthmān, Ibn ʿAsākir moves on to the narrative of the siege and murder. If we consider "strategy of placement" it is noteworthy that he begins with another *ḥadīth* about Muḥammad predicting the *fitnah* and that ʿUthmān would be killed unjustly.[221] This presents the opening context for all that is to follow. Second, he states that Muḥammad said it would be hypocrites who would try and remove the shirt of authority from ʿUthmān.[222] And finally, he includes the *ḥadīth* in which ʿUthmān promised Muḥammad he would not fight. This triad of themes defending ʿUthmān provides the interpretive framework for the various stages of the revolt.

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[219] These include the canonical ones found in Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ*, as well as less common ones such as one that suggests the band that killed ʿUthmān were unbelievers. Ibid., 71.

[220] Except of course writing the Qur'ān, which was clearly religious rather than political.

[221] Ibn ʿAsākir, 264-75. Indeed he gives ten pages of this *ḥadīth* all with various *isnāds*.

In his narrative of the revolt, Ibn ʿAsākir relies on accounts by Sayf b. ʿUmar and for the murder, Khalīfah b. Khayyāṭ, Ibn Saʿd, Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣfahānī, and Sayf b. ʿUmar. His emphasis on ʿUthmān's bloody murder rather than events leading up to it fits with a biography that focuses more on ʿUthmān's pietistic character than events and choices that may have contributed to his murder. That ʿUthmān was killed violently and unjustly rather than due to any significant failing on his part is further developed in the scenes surrounding the murder. Ibn ʿAsākir first gives around seven pages of accounts of the dream ʿUthmān had in which Muḥammad urged him to be patient and told him he would breakfast with him that day. One of these even has ʿUthmān "going up" to Muḥammad, a much stronger image than Muḥammad appearing to him in a dream. Moreover, in this version Muḥammad told ʿUthmān that if he chose to fight he would be victorious, but if he chose not to, he would breakfast with Muḥammad in Paradise. The account concludes by stating ʿUthmān was killed that day, implying he chose to die rather than fight.[223] In addition to not defending himself and forbidding others from doing so as well, the murder accounts themselves all focus on ʿUthmān quietly reading Qurʾān while he was brutally attacked.[224] Although, varying accounts of the murder fill about forty pages of text, these do not offer new versions, rather they gather together and repeat much of the same thing from Sayf b. ʿUmar, Ibn Khayyāṭ, Ibn Saʿd, Abū Nuʿaym al-Iṣfahānī, etc.

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[222] Ibid., 276-82.
[223] Ibid., 393.

Ibn ʿAsākir provides some form of closing context or commentary which presents the full significance of this event. We are told that the community will have three peculiar traits (*khiṣāl*): killing ʿUthmān, burning the kaʿba, and imposing the *jizya* tax on Muslims.[225] Moreover, the first *fitnah* was the day of the house, or murder of ʿUthmān, and the last *fitnah* will be the anti-Christ.[226] Due to the significance and abhorrent nature of ʿUthmān's murder it is not surprising that Ibn ʿAsākir includes Ibn ʿAbbās' remark that if the people did not demand [retribution] for ʿUthmān's blood, the rocks would have been thrown down from heaven.[227]

One can easily see how Ibn ʿAsākir's *Taʾrīkh madīnat Dimashq* would have been encouraged by Nūr al-Dīn. In it political events and religious ideals are melded together to form a coherent and consistent whole. In light of the need to rally Muslims in the ongoing battles against the Crusaders and the role of Damascus as the center of Zangid government, his *Taʾrīkh* highlights the glorious past and potential future of the Islamic community. Ibn ʿAsākir also reflects the close and mutually supportive relationship between the *ʿulamāʾ* and the state.

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[224] Ibn ʿAsākir provides four pages of *akhbār* detailing how ʿUthmān was kneeling and reading the Qurʾān when he was killed. Ibid., 225-8.
[225] Ibid., 457.
[226] Ibid., 458.
[227] Ibid., 459.

That Ibn al-Jawzī was in the hire of the ʿAbbāsid caliph is reflected in his portrayal of ʿUthmān's murder. He relies on the accounts by Sayf b. ʿUmar that contrast ʿUthmān's piety with the attackers' aggression and greed. ʿUthmān refused to fight because of his vision of Muḥammad (and Abū Bakr and ʿUmar) promising him he would breakfast with them in Paradise.[228] ʿUthmān sat reading the Qur'ān, as the band burned down the door.[229] There is no mention of Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr and those who did enter to strike ʿUthmān were unable to do so when they saw his piety and ʿUthmān reminded them he had been given his authority by God. Finally it was al-Ghāfiqī who struck him so that his blood flowed on the Qur'ān. The linkage between violence against the caliph and violence against religion is asserted when al-Ghāfiqī is then described kicking the Qur'ān with his foot. The point is reiterated when a bit later, as the band ran through the house seizing what they could find, a man passed by ʿUthmān, kicked his head with his foot and it landed on the Qur'ān.[230] The violence and greed of the attackers is highlighted as they "took turns pouncing upon [ʿUthmān,]" sliced Nā'ilah's hand, killed the servants who tried to defend ʿUthmān, and finally seized the treasury. Finally we are told they buried ʿUthmān and his servants without washing their bodies and "they were martyrs."[231] Rather than the murdered unjust imām, ʿUthmān's status as a martyr elevates the status of all murdered caliphs.

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[228] Ibn al-Jawzī, 53.
[229] Ibid., 55.
[230] Ibid., 59.
[231] Ibid.

Conclusion

If the writers and thinkers of the third/ninth century were developing an ideology of what the caliphate should be, those between the fourth/tenth and sixth/ twelfth were legitimating what the caliphate had actually become. Ideals were replaced with accommodation and justification. The writers of the ninth century were working to formulate a theory of the caliphate that encompassed both religious and political authority, while those of the later centuries -- in light of the political realities -- focused on developing the religious authority of the caliph. We would expect to find then in writings on the *Rāshidūn* Caliphs an emphasis on their religious virtue rather than political policies. Indeed this is what we do find. But rather than stagnation or indifference, we see an active developing of this image of the caliph. A renewed interest in the more critical and nuanced historical narratives emerges in the seventh/thirteenth century in the glow of the victories against the Crusaders and in the shadow of the encroaching Mongol onslaught.

> Once we are enlivened to the extent to which the form of the text is the place where it does its ideologically significant work, aspects of the text that a criticism unsensitized to the operations of a form-as-message will find bewildering, surprising, inconsistent, or simply offensive. . . themselves become meaningful as message.[1]

CHAPTER THREE – RESIGNATION & REFUTATION:
ʿUTHMĀN in the SEVENTH/THIRTEENTH CENTURY

Introduction

It is difficult to speak about the historiography of the seventh/thirteenth century, divided as it is by the rule of different dynasties and the destruction of Baghdad by the Mongols in 656/1258. Although it is impossible to deny the rise and fall of political dynasties, it is equally impossible to ignore the continuity of religious, economic, and cultural institutions. While modern scholars have addressed both the continuities and discontinuities between the Ayyūbid (589-648/1193-1250) and Mamlūk (648-922/1250-1517) periods, and the pre and post-Mongol eras, thus far they have emphasized the continuities in medieval Islamic historiography.[2] This is no doubt due in large part to the perceived continuity in the role and outlook of the *ʿulamāʾ*. However, the content and form of the narratives of ʿUthmān produced in the seventh/thirteenth century reveal a dialogue connected to, but distinct from, earlier and later periods. A closer analysis of these narratives illustrates the ongoing dynamism of the medieval Islamic historical discourse.

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[1] White, *The Content of the Form*, 204.

[2] For scholars who emphasize a break between the Ayyūbid and Mamlūk regimes see P.M. Holt, *The Age of the Crusades: The Near East from the Eleventh Century to 1517* (London and New York: Longman, 1986), 138; Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge*, 11; Robert Irwin, *The Middle East in the Middle Ages: The Early Mamlūk Sultanate 1250-1382* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 26. R. Stephen Humphreys also notes a political break between the two periods in *From Saladin to the Mongols: The Ayyubids of Damascus, 1193-1260* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1977). On the other hand, Michael Chamberlain emphasizes continuities in his *Knowledge and Social Practice*, 44. Tarif Khalidi categorizes the historiography from both periods as "*siyasa*-oriented" in *Arabic Historical Thought* and Donald Little adopts this description in his essay, "Historiography of the Ayyūbid and Mamlūk Epochs," in *The Cambridge History of Egypt vol. I, 640-1517*, ed. Carl Petry (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 413.

In order to highlight the ways in which the form and content of historical narratives can point to contextual changes, I begin my analysis with the narratives themselves and then turn to historical influences. I consider ʿIzz al-Dīn ibn al-Athīr's (d. 630/1233) *Al-Kāmil fī'l-ta'rīkh* (*The Complete History*)[3] Shams al-Dīn Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī's (d. 654/1256) *Mir'āt al-zamān fī ta'rīkh al-aʿyān* (*Mirror of the Time as Reflected in the History of the Notables*),[4] ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd's (d. 656/1258) *Sharḥ nahj al-balāghah* (*Elucidation of the Path of Eloquence*),[5] Aḥmad b. ʿAbdallāh Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Ṭabarī's (d. 694/1295) *Al-Riyāḍ al-naḍirah fī manāqib al-ʿasharah*, (*The Radiant Practice of the Virtues of the Ten Promised Paradise*),[6] and Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā ibn Abī Bakr's *Al-Tamhīd wa-l-bayān fī maqtal al-shahīd ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān* (*An Introduction and Elucidation of the Murder of the Martyr ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān*) written in 699/1299.[7] At first glance these sources appear very different: two universal chronicles, a commentary on the sayings of ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib, the first Shīʿite imām, a treatise on the ten promised Paradise,[8] and a biography of the "martyr" ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān. However, they represent a continuum of historical and political developments in the thirteenth century, as well as distinct responses in the second half of the century to the developments of the first half.

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[3] ʿIzz al-Dīn Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil fī'l-ta'rīkh*, ed., C.J. Tornberg, 14 vols. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1851-76); reprint (with corrections and new pagination) in 13 vols., (Beirut: Dār Sader and Dār Beirut, 1965-67); and Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil fī'l-ta'rīkh*, ed. Muḥammad Yūsuf al-Daqqāq (Beirut: Dār al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1995).

[4] Shams al-Dīn Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, "Mir'āt al-zamān fī ta'rīkh al-aʿyān," [microfilm], Ta'rīkh: 466 (Maʿhad al-Makhṭuṭāt, Cairo).

[5] ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd, *Sharḥ nahj al-balāghah*, ed. Muḥammad Abū'l-Faḍl Ibrahīm, vol. 3 (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1987).

[6] Aḥmad b. ʿAbdallāh Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Ṭabarī, *Al-Riyāḍ al-naḍirah fī manāqib al-ʿasharah*, 4 vols (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, n.d.).

[7] Muhammad b. Yahyā ibn Bakr, *Al-Tamhīd wa'l-bayān fī maqtal al-shahīd ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān*, ed. Maḥmud Y. Zāyid (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfa, 1964); and Muḥammad b. Yahyā Ibn Abī Bark, "Al-Tamhīd wa-l-bayān fī maqtal al-shahīd ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān," [microfilm] ta'rīkh mīm 23 (Dār al-Kutub, Cairo).

Narratives of ʿUthmān from the first half of the seventh/thirteenth century reflect a resignation to political realities and a muted Sunnī-Shīʿite discourse leaning towards efforts at reconciliation. Ibn al-Athīr, Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī, and Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd's narratives of ʿUthmān show a renewed interest in early Islamic history and sources. There is greater diversity in their accounts: Ibn al-Athīr relies heavily on al-Ṭabarī and Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī uses a variety of sources,[9] while Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd was strongly influenced by al-Jāḥiẓ and appears to go back to pre-Ṭabarī sources. Moreover, their narratives become progressively more critical of ʿUthmān. The ability or willingness to include more that is critical of ʿUthmān may reflect a greater commitment to earlier historical sources, a different Sunnī-Shīʿite alignment, a different political landscape, or all of the above. The authors appear to be seeking a compromise on the religious controversies stemming from the revolt against ʿUthmān, while being largely indifferent to the political ones. In this way the historical discourse from the first half of the thirteenth century differs significantly from the idealized biographies of the previous century and the politically nuanced histories of the Mamlūk period.

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[8] There is a *ḥadīth* in which Muḥammad promised Paradise to ten of his Companions, significantly all from the tribe of Quraysh. According to Maya Yazigi, although this tradition dates from the ninth century, it received much more attention between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries as an ideological counter-weight to the Shīʿite doctrine of the twelve imāms. Maya Yazigi, "*Ḥadīth al-ʿashara* or the Political Uses of a Tradition," *Studia Islamica* 86 (1997): 159-167.

[9] In his narrative of ʿUthmān, Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī cites most often Ibn Saʿd and al-Bukhārī and then al-Wāqidī, Sayf b. ʿUmar, al-Balādhurī, and al-Ṭabarī.

The general ambivalence in the narratives from the first half of the century stands in marked contrast to the aggressive and confrontational narratives of the second half of the century. Muḥibb al-Dīn and Ibn Abī Bakr's narratives of ʿUthmān are in many ways a response to the views expressed in the earlier histories. Unlike the biographies of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, their biographies absorb the more varied historical accounts and refute, rather than deny, the criticisms of ʿUthmān. They do this through a debate format similar to Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd's narrative. They too focus primarily on Sunnī-Shīʿite tensions. However, rather than negotiating differences for the sake of unity, they blame the Shīʿites, or the *Rawāfiḍ*, for the revolt against ʿUthmān, and the subsequent divisions within the community. Their more aggressive anti-Shīʿite tone is new in the narratives of ʿUthmān. Unlike the authors from the decades prior to the fall of Baghdad to the Mongols, they appeal to Sunnī rather than Muslim unity, a unity that is achieved through loyalty to rulers past and present.

IBN AL-ATHĪR & SIBṬ IBN AL-JAWZĪ

While Ibn al-Jawzī's return to the format of annalistic chronicle suggested new trends in the historiography of the period, it is his grandson, Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, and Ibn al-Athīr who mark a full return to not only the chronicle format, but the narratives of the third/ninth century compilations, al-Ṭabarī in particular. Moreover, unlike Ibn al-Jawzī, their greater faithfulness to the early sources means that Ibn al-

Athīr and Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī's narratives are more critical of ʿUthmān. However, the narratives as a whole do not develop these personal criticisms into a particular political position. Their narratives suggest that it might be a greater detachment from the early controversies rather than a renewed interest in them that allowed such a historiographical shift. These two authors seem ambivalent about the tension between justice and obedience or the role of the caliph, sultan, and *ʿulamāʾ* in resolving it.[10] On the other hand, their narratives do reflect an ongoing concern with Sunnī-Shīʿite debates, but they take them in a somewhat surprising direction. Ibn al-Athīr and Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī's willingness to criticize ʿUthmān indicates a desire to move beyond the divisiveness of past polemics.

Ibn al-Athīr was a conservative scholar who respected the moral and religious policies of the Zangids, but was also reconciled to the political policies of the Ayyūbids. He spent most of his adult life in Mosul and claimed he was a private scholar, despite boasting of a close relationship with Nūr al-Dīn, being present for Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn's (Saladin) conquest of Mosul and later for his military campaigns against the Crusaders.[11] He wrote much of *Al-Kāmil fī'l-taʾrīkh* at the turn of the century, supposedly as a personal reference,[12] abandoned it to write a history of the

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[10] This ambivalence may reflect, especially in Ibn al-Athīr's case, his status as an independent scholar, but it also suggests the need to qualify the role of the *ʿulamāʾ* in this period as well as contemporary views of the past and its relevance in the present.

[11] D.S. Richards, "Ibn al-Athīr and the Later Parts of the *Kāmil*: A Study of Aims and Methods," in *Medieval Historical Writing in the Christian and Islamic Worlds*, ed. D.O. Morgan (London: SOAS, 1982), 76-108.

[12] Ibid., 84. Other statements by Ibn al-Athīr make it clear however, that he hoped others would read it and benefit from it. Ibid., 91.

Zangids, and then returned to the *Kāmil* at the end of his life.[13] In the earlier part of Ibn al-Athīr's *History* he relies on al-Ṭabarī without *isnāds* and with minimal editing, which supports Humphreys' conclusion that the *Kāmil* is "perhaps the most conservative of all the major universal chronicles."[14] His conservatism may reflect a greater respect for his sources, a delineation between past and present challenges, or both. For example, D.S. Richards claims, "Ibn al-Athīr's analysis of the political process and the business of ruling is not especially profound. Events are seen in terms of personalities and moral standards. Morality here means aspiring to the Islamic ideal of the ruler, who should uphold the Holy Law, honour its interpreters, the ʿulamāʾ, and deal justly with his subjects and defend the territory of Islam."[15] On the other hand, Richards also notes how Ibn al-Athīr occasionally gives a glimpse of political realities in which various amīrs jockey for position and in which bowing to public pressure or supporting a Christian Armenian prince are acceptable for the political advantage they may provide.[16]

Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī was raised by his grandfather, Ibn al-Jawzī, in Baghdad and upon his grandfather's death moved to Damascus, "where he joined the Ayyūbid al-Muʿaẓẓam, then his successors al-Nāṣir Dāwūd and al-Ashraf."[17] He "inherited Ibn al-D̲jawzī's eloquence as a preacher and it was essentially for this that he was known during his life-time, moving crowds and princes to tears, urging them to take part in the Holy War, protesting against the giving up of Jerusalem to the Franks [1229], etc."[18] In his universal history, *Mirʾāt al-zamān fī taʾrīkh al-aʿyān*, he adopts Ibn al-Jawzī's format of including biographies at the end of each year, but he goes far beyond the *Muntaẓam* in scope and detail. He may also have retained some of his Ḥanbalī particularism in that more than Ibn al-Athīr, he carefully documents his sources. His careful copying undermines any sense of a unique perspective or contribution and may have contributed to the greater attention that has been given to Ibn al-Athīr's history.[19]

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[13] Ibid., 79. In contrast to his treatment of the Zangids, Ibn al-Athīr is quite critical of Saladin, which has led some to question the overall objectivity of the latter part of the *Kāmil*. Ibid., 85.
[14] Humphreys, "Ta'rīkh," *EI²*.
[15] Richards, "Ibn al-Athīr," 85.
[16] Ibid., 85-6.
[17] Claude Cahen, "Ibn al-D̲jawzī, Sibṭ," *EI²*. He supposedly wrote a "mirrors for princes" for al-Mu'aẓẓam. Ibid.

Although the early parts of both of these histories have been dismissed as summaries of al-Ṭabarī, careful analysis of the ways the authors selected and edited their sources make it possible to see that their portrayal of the past was colored by their personal views and contemporary milieu. Ibn al-Athīr edits out aspects of the narrative that were controversial from a Sunnī-Shīʿite perspective while retaining many of ʿUthmān's political failings.[20] Thus he is more critical than his predecessors and less critical than his successors. Ibn al-Jawzī includes more of the critical accounts, which may reflect greater thoroughness as a historian, or support the accusations that he had Shīʿite leanings.[21]

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[18] Ibid.

[19] *Mirʾat al-zamān* has yet to be fully edited and published.

[20] For example, in year twenty-four, the year of the *shūrā* that elected ʿUthmān, he simply says the people of the *shūrā* united around him. He gave a sermon and the people gave him the *bayʿa*. He skips not only the contentious aspect of the *shūrā*, but ʿUthmān's first sermon and letters he wrote to the garrison towns. Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil*, ed. C.J. Tornberg, vol. 3: 79 (page references are from reprint edition).

[21] Cahen, "Ibn al-D̲j̲awzī, Sibṭ."

Claude Cahen's entry on Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī in the revised edition of *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* illustrates the need for greater understanding of this author's religio-political views and how they fit within his contemporary context. Cahen notes that a treatise on ʿAlī, the ʿAlids and the ʿAlid imāms has been attributed to Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī. He goes on to say that if this is true it is problematic because one would assume "*a priori* that they would be polemical treatises against Shīʿis, were it not for the fact that al-Dhahābī stated Sibṭ ibn al-D̲j̲awzī was suspected of Shīʿi tendencies."[22] Cahen concludes his article by stating, "The existing manuscripts would repay study." Indeed they would. Consider, for example, Ibn Kathīr's (d. 774/1373) obituary notice for Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī in which he states:

> He [Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī] was asked on the day of ʿĀshūrāʾ by al-Malik al-Nāṣir,[23] master of Aleppo, to mention something to the people about the murder of al-Ḥusayn. So he mounted the *minbar* and sat a long time without speaking. Then he placed a handkerchief upon his face and cried violently then he said while crying [two lines of poetry]. He descended from the *minbar* still crying and went up to Ṣāliḥiyyah. He was like that, mercy of God upon him.[24]

Greater knowledge of Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī and his milieu reveals a more complex religio-political climate.

When we consider the narrative of ʿUthmān in Ibn al-Athīr and Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, what stands out is on the one hand an amazing similarity, and on the other, Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī's fuller account of ʿUthmān's failings. A comparison of their treatment of the revolt and murder of ʿUthmān is enough to reveal the similarities in their narratives and their varying degrees of criticism of ʿUthmān.[25]

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[22] Ibid.
[23] Nāṣir Yūsuf II (1234-1260). This seems to take place in Damascus, hence between 1250-1256.
[24] Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa'l-nihāyah*, vol. 13 (Beirut: Dār al-Ḥayyāʾ al-Turāth al-ʿArabī), 227.

The Revolt and Murder

Ibn al-Athīr's account of events leading up to the revolt focuses on problems in the provinces in the way of growing unrest and personal grievances. Circumstances more than anything ʿUthmān has done appear to be to blame. We know that complaints against ʿUthmān were increasing, but the situation remains vague.[26] The problems started in Kufa because it was "emptied of leaders" and Yazīd b. al-Qays set out to depose ʿUthmān accompanied by Ibn Sabāʾ.[27] In contrast, Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, gives a full list of the complaints against ʿUthmān. ʿUthmān put the Umayyads "on the necks of the Muslims," he appointed relatives and members of his house, gave a "fifth of Africa" to Marwān, and took money from the treasury. These accusations are echoed in another account which states the Companions were upset at ʿUthmān's favoring of the Umayyads so that after six years they were fed up and seven hundred Egyptians set out for Medina.[28] Indeed the complaints go on for several pages from several sources. It was the "leaders (*aʿyān*) of the Companions" who gathered to complain.[29]

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[25] Fedwa Malti-Douglas also notes the more critical tone in the biographical literature of Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī and those after him compared with Ibn al-Jawzī and Ibn ʿAsākir. She, however, does not see it as a marked shift, but something that fluctuated depending on the *madhhab* of the author and his relation to his subject. Malti-Douglas, "Controversy and its Effects on the Biographical Tradition of al-Khatīb al-Baghdadī," *Studia Islamica* 46 (1997): 115-132.

[26] Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil*, ed., Tornberg, vol. 3:136.

[27] Ibid., 137.

[28] Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, 219a-b. Transmitted from al-Balādhurī.

[29] Ibid., 220a-b.

Ibn al-Athīr begins year thirty-five with the Sayf account from al-Ṭabarī about the spreading of the Sabā'iyyah heresy while Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī states that it was the year of ʿUthmān's murder and ʿAlī's caliphate. Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī then tells of the oath of allegiance being given to ʿAlī, his first sermon, and the beginning of his caliphate and only then returns to the revolt against ʿUthmān in what is technically the obituary notice for him in year thirty-five. One of Sibṭ's first remarks is that unlike ʿUmar, ʿUthmān did not keep the Quraysh in Medina, he did not wait a year to change governors as ʿUmar suggested, and the people were divided. Only then does he tell about the activities of Ibn Sabā' and the Sabā'iyyah heresy.[30] Both authors tell of bands from Kufa, Basra, and Egypt gathering at Medina and that only a few of the Companions joined them. Ibn al-Athīr has ʿUthmān sending ʿAlī out to negotiate while Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī says it was Maslamah. Thus Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī has chosen an account that minimizes the evidence of ʿAlī's support for ʿUthmān.

In both narratives it is the letter to the Egyptian governor that brought the besiegers back to Medina. Ibn al-Athīr, however, gives the version in which it is stated the bands departed only so they could return and catch the Medinese by surprise; and when they did return, ʿAlī pointed out that the only way the Basrans and Kufans could have known about the letter was if it was a pre-arranged plot.[31] Although Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī gives four accounts of the discovery of the letter, he does not include this particular explanation.

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[30] Ibid., 242a. Ibn al-Athīr makes the same remarks about not keeping the Quraysh in Medina, as well as about having various individuals beaten. He puts this at the end of the narrative on the revolt in the section on ʿUthmān's conduct, which in many ways also functions as an obituary. Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil*, ed., Muḥammad Yūsuf al-Daqqāq, vol. 3, 70-71. The remaining citations are from this edition.

[31] Ibid., 52.

In the confrontations between ʿUthmān and his besiegers, both narratives include the criticisms that ʿUthmān needed to remove himself or be killed because the letter had shown that he was either a liar or unqualified to rule. Only Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, however, includes the statement that the letter made his blood lawful. Sibṭ also includes a repeat of the grievances against ʿUthmān along with his defense while Ibn al-Athīr skips this entire account by Sayf b. ʿUmar. Both narratives include ʿUthmān's defense that it was only lawful to kill a Muslim for three reasons and that if they killed him the community would be permanently divided and the sword of God would be on their necks. Significantly, however, they also both include the besiegers' rejoinder that ʿUthmān was a test from God and:

> In the Book of God, we find that other men are put to death besides the three named by you. [We find that] the man who spreads corruption in the land is put to death, and likewise the oppressor who fights to continue his oppression and the man who prevents justice (*al-ḥaqq*) in any way resists it, then scornfully battles against it. You have committed oppression. You have scorned justice, resisting it and preventing it from being carried out.[32]

Not too surprisingly then, both accounts also tell of ʿUthmān repenting and weeping and then refusing to make the required changes, although Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī repeats this point more often and more forcefully. Both authors tell of ʿUthmān choosing to listen to Marwān's advice and begging ʿAlī to negotiate a three-day reprieve in order to meet the people's demands. ʿAlī agreed to do this only when ʿUthmān had signed a contract that he would change governors and stop oppression.[33] ʿUthmān used the time to prepare to fight and to gather weapons. Both authors have ʿUthmān's response: "How do I look if I do what you demand? Authority would then belong with you."[34]

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[32] Al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 222, Ibn al-Athīr, 63, Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, 259a.

[33] Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī uses slightly stronger language of "contract" and "covenant" whereas Ibn al-Athīr says simply that they wrote a letter [of agreement.] Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, 262b; Ibn al-Athīr, 61.

Despite this very negative portrayal of ʿUthmān, both authors also retain the standard defenses for ʿUthmān as well. ʿUthmān reminded his attackers that he had enlarged the mosque in Medina, bought the well, and supplied Muḥammad's army. And in direct contrast to the account of gathering weapons, both authors include all the reports of ʿUthmān refusing to fight, as well as the *ḥadīth* in which he promised Muḥammad he would not fight.[35] Nevertheless, both narratives tell of battles at the door to the house.

Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī's narrative of the murder is more critical, yet he begins his narrative of the murder itself with an account by Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal?] which reminds the reader ʿUthmān's murder was predicted by Muḥammad.[36] Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī gives several different accounts of the murder. The first one is attributed to al-Wāqidī and describes Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr as among his attackers; the second describes how ʿUthmān was stabbed in the chest nine times and the blood surged up and stopped his speech.[37] In contrast, Ibn al-Athīr starts off with the account of three different men sent to kill ʿUthmān in which each one was unable to do so when ʿUthmān told them that he had done none of the three things which legitimate killing a Muslim and that he would not remove a shirt of authority placed upon him by God.[38] Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr was the last to enter, he grabbed ʿUthmān's beard, but then departed after ʿUthmān reprimanded him with memories of his father.[39]

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[34] Al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis,* 89; Ibn al-Athīr, 62; and Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, 263a.

[35] Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī also includes the account that claiming to kill one man is to kill all as well as the warning that killing a prophet leads to the death of 70,000 and a Caliph 35,000. Interestingly, neither author includes *ḥadīth* such as Muḥammad showing modesty in front of ʿUthmān. This is perhaps more noteworthy in Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī who certainly has the opportunity and traditional format in the form of a biographical obituary, but uses the space instead to tell of the revolt. The omission of the *ḥadīth* is less notable in Ibn al-Athīr who is clearly writing an annalistic chronicle following al-Ṭabarī who, for the most part, does not include *ḥadīth* either.

[36] Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, 264b.

[37] Ibid., 265a. This particular account is found in most narratives of ʿUthmān. His attacker stated he stabbed him three times for God's sake and six times because of his own anger. It is perhaps noteworthy that Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī chose this account of the murder. It also appears in al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 220.

Both narratives include a great deal of blameworthy behavior on ʿUthmān's part, but also many of the standard defenses. Although Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī's narrative is more critical in comparison, it is not clear from this one narrative whether it is enough to support accusations of "Shīʿite tendencies." What the narratives do reflect is an ongoing, albeit muted, Sunnī-Shīʿite discourse. They also support the assertion that this period was marked by a greater interest in historical narratives and sources. They also show a greater ability to discuss some of the controversial aspects arising from them. What is not clear is whether this reflects greater or lesser concern with these controversies. In fact, these two authors seem largely indifferent to the political implications of the revolt against ʿUthmān, and only mildly interested in the religious implications. How do we account for this in a period described as experiencing a then-and-now perspective with the past in which a more active *ʿulamāʾ* defined heresy as a way of wielding cultural capital?[40] We seem a long way from Ibn ʿAsākir's portrayal of ʿUthmān as a religious icon and Ibn al-Jawzī's defense of ʿUthmān as an ideal ruler.

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[38] Ibn al-Athīr, 67.

[39] Ibn al-Athīr notes there is a variant account that says Muḥammad struck him, but Ibn al-Athīr declares the first one more reliable. Ibid., 68.

[40] See Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice*, 5-9; Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought*, 184.

SULṬĀNS & CALIPHS

The previous chapter concluded with an analysis of Ibn ʿAsākir and Ibn al-Jawzī; in many ways they witnessed at the end of their lives significant political changes in the Middle East. Ibn ʿAsākir was present when Saladin entered Damascus. The reign of Saladin (569-589/1174-1193) and that of his descendents, the Ayyūbids, marked a shift in the politics of the region. Like his predecessor Saladin was set on battling the Crusaders. However, whereas Nūr al-Dīn supported his crusading effort through strengthening Sunnī Islam, Saladin also engaged in *Realpolitik*, making treaties with Christians and Shīʿites in order to achieve his ultimate end of unifying the Muslims and defeating the Crusaders. Furthermore, his successors continued the struggle against the Crusaders, but also made alliances with them in order to secure their own positions over and against their Muslim rivals.[41] Their decisions were motivated by political, economic, and military concerns more than religious or ideological ones.

Similarly, the Caliph al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh (r. 575-622/1180-1225) took whatever steps were necessary to secure and maintain his own authority. Not only did he make alliances based on pragmatism, but when he came into conflict with powers in the east trying to reassert control of the sultanate over the caliphate, he appointed a series of Shīʿite viziers who had experience in Persia. Under the Shīʿite vizier Ibn al-Qaṣṣāb, Ibn al-Jawzī fell out of favor and was sent into exile, where he was put under house arrest and the care of a Shīʿite jailer. It was the intervention of al-Nāṣir's mother who achieved his release. Ibn al-Jawzī returned to Baghdad in 598/1199 only to die a short time later.[42] It is not clear whether al-Nāṣir actually entertained Shīʿite views. The religious and ideological ambiguity in Baghdad at the end of the twelfth and first half of the thirteenth century is evidenced by the fact that despite the treatment of Ibn al-Jawzī and the continuing role of Shīʿite viziers, one of Ibn al-Jawzī's sons succeeded him as palace preacher and even prepared al-Nāṣir's body for burial.[43]

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[41] They also pursued the policy of building Sunnism up in their domains by endowing *madrasas* and other religious establishments.

Some of the apparent ambivalence of the age is also reflected in the political uses of the Islamic sacred past. The tomb of the Prophet in Medina seems to have been the subject of renewed concern some time in the twelfth century. Nūr al-Dīn and Saladin are both attributed with establishing the eunuch society that guards the tomb of the Prophet in Medina.[44] Al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh also added to the complex of the Prophet's tomb in Medina and had the underground water courses of Mecca restored.[45] This was a part of a rivalry between the caliph and Saladin over who was the true guardian of the sacred places.[46] While al-Nāṣir attempted to have the sharīf of Mecca assassinated for opposing some of his policies, Saladin made treaties with Shīʿite sharīfs who controlled the Hijaz in return for their support against the

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[42] Mason, *Two Statesmen*, 97; Laoust, *Les Schismes*, 241.

[43] Mason, *Two Statesmen*, 114.

[44] Shaun Marmon, *Eunuchs and Sacred Boundaries in Islamic Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 34. The company of eunuchs that were placed to guard the tomb is traced back to the twelfth century. The tradition is attributed to both Nūr al-Dīn and Saladin, with many scholars taking a compromise position in which Nūr al-Dīn started it, and Saladin enlarged it.

[45] Ibid., 48; Mason, *Two Statesmen* 116-7.

[46] Marmon, *Eunuchs*, 35. Al-Nāṣir was largely overshadowed by Saladin until his death in 589/1193. Mason, *Two Statesmen*, 88. After Saladin recaptured Jerusalem, Mecca also become the center of scholarly debate as some urged for a return to the original direction of prayer towards Jerusalem. Ibid., 117.

Crusaders.[47] Saladin's son and successor in Aleppo, al-Malik al-Ẓāhīr (d. 612/1215), treated the Shīʿites considerately and the last Ayyūbid amīr of Aleppo, al-Malik al-Nāṣir Yūsuf (r. 634-659/1236-1261) had the two grand Shīʿite sanctuaries to the shaykhs al-Muḥassin and al-Ḥusayn restored.[48] On the other hand, the Ayyūbid rulers of Damascus actively attracted Sunnī scholars and endowed numerous religious foundations.[49] Similarly, the Caliph al-Mustanṣir (r. 623-640/1226-1242) restored the tombs of the tenth and eleventh Shīʿite imāms in Samarra, but he also founded the famous Mustanṣiriyyah *madrasah* which taught the four Sunnī legal schools on an equal basis.[50]

In part the political policies of the Caliph al-Nāṣir, Saladin, and their successors were made possible by significant changes in the Shīʿite fortunes. The eleventh and twelfth centuries were characterized by the threat posed by the Egyptian Fāṭimids and Ismāʾīlī pockets of resistance and acts of terror in Syria, Iraq, and Persia. However, Saladin had brought an end to the Fāṭimid regime and the *khuṭbah* was declared in Cairo in the name of the ʿAbbāsid Caliph in 567/1171. The latter part of the twelfth century also saw greater inward focus on the part of the Ismāʾīlī community. In 607/1210, the Ismāʾīlī leader of Alamut, the imām Jalal al-Dīn al-Ṣabbāḥ (Hasan II), actually declared his conversion to Sunnism and gave allegiance to the Caliph al-Nāṣir. An alliance was formed between the two men. His successor Muḥammad III continued his father's policies enforcing Sunnī *sharīʿah.* And even later, as the Ismāʾīlīs appeared to be drawing away from the Sunnī fold, their mountain strongholds still provided a much appreciated refuge to the Sunnī scholars fleeing the Mongol invasions of 618/1221.

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[47] Marmon, *Eunuchs*, 139, fn. 169; Mason, *Two Statesmen*, 117;

[48] Laoust, *Les Schismes*, 234 (page reference to reprint edition). Laoust also points out there was a significant Shīʿite population in Aleppo in the first half of the thirteenth century. Ibid., 233.

[49] R.S. Humphreys, "Politics and Architectural Patronage in Ayyubid Damascus," in *The Islamic World from Classical to Modern Times*, ed. C.E. Bosworth and Charles Issawi, 151-174 (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1989). Humphreys describes the court in Damascus working as "pole of attraction" for scholars from all over, including those moving west before the Mongol advance.

[50] Mason, *Two Statesmen*, 132.

The waning of Sunnī-Shīʿite antagonism reflected in the narratives of ʿUthmān from the first half of the seventh/thirteenth century is supported by secondary scholarship on the *ʿulamāʾ* from this period. Humphreys attributes the cooling of tensions, in part, to the education reform begun by Niẓām al-Mulk and continued by Nūr al-Dīn and Saladin, in which the Sunnī *ʿulamāʾ* and largely Shīʿite civil bureaucracy received a common education in the religious sciences.[51] He concludes that in the Ayyūbid period "the mutual hostility [between *ʿulamāʾ* and *kuttāb*] so obvious in Buyid times or in the heyday of the Abbasid Caliphate is hardly visible under these new conditions; on those few occasions when it does appear, it seems more the result of confessional distaste (for many civil functionaries were still Christians or Jews or only recent converts to Islam) than a rivalry between two value-systems and ways of life."[52] This is echoed in Michael Chamberlain's recent study on the *ʿulamāʾ* of Damscus. Although Chamberlain describes the*ʿulamāʾ* as combating heresy, his examples are all either conflicts between the Sunnī legal schools, or, as Humphreys noted, against recent converts.[53] Sunnī-Shīʿite controversy seems remarkably absent. Chamberlain argues that the *ʿulamāʾ*'s control of religious knowledge, in cooperation with the state, was a part of their competition for patronage and positions, similar to the struggles among the amīrs for political and military positions.[54] And although the state often intervened to put down such religious rivalries as sources of *fitnah*, the period as a whole (1190-1350) was one of perpetual inter-Sunnī political and religious *fitnah*.[55]

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[51] Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols*, 377.
[52] Ibid.
[53] Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice*, 167-175.

Remarkably, however, neither the in-fighting of the Ayyūbid amīrs or the weakening position, once again, of the ʿAbbāsid caliphs, seems to have instigated renewed discussions among the *ʿulamāʾ* on the tension between obedience and justice or the caliph-sulṭān arrangement. This may have been due to the continuing presence of external threats, first in the form of the Crusaders and increasingly the Mongols, which encouraged a desire for political and religious solidarity.[56] Although there is evidence of a rivalry between Saladin and al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh it was a matter of egos rather than real power or even ideology. Al-Nāṣir recognized the need for the military support of Saladin and other sulṭāns. Similarly, Saladin always presented himself as the servant of the caliph, defending the cause of Islam.[57] Moreover, the caliph was largely irrelevant for Saladin's successors, rarely exerting any influence except to settle disputes between the Ayyūbid rulers of Damascus and Cairo.[58] Nor did the Ayyūbids see themselves as the protectors of the caliphate. They used the title sulṭān quite freely among themselves and made little effort to acquire official recognition of the title from Baghdad.

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[54] Ibid., 5-9.

[55] Ibid., 171-2.

[56] In Baghdad this may have been due in part to the changed position of the Ḥanbalīs who were seeking to retain their hard-earned influence, whereas in previous centuries they had been in the place of the opposition. Mason, *Two Statesmen*, 93.

[57] For example, when al-Nāṣir wanted Saladin to give up the title "protector of the two sanctuaries" arguing that such an honor belonged to the caliph, Saladin seems to have obliged. Mason, *Two Statesmen*, 89.

IBN ABĪ'L-ḤADĪD

In Baghdad, Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzi's contemporary, ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd, produced a narrative on ʿUthmān that further illustrates the political and religious ambivalence of the day. Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd was a scholar of early Islamic history and *adab* who died in the siege of Baghdad by the Mongols in 656/1258. He is best known for his *Sharḥ nahj al-balāghah*, a commentary on the *Nahj al-balāghah*, a collection of "fragments of speeches, letters, homilies and maxims, etc. traditionally attributed to ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib."[59] Ibn Abī'l Ḥadīd's commentary on the sayings of ʿAlī gives some indication of his religio-political orientation, but only some. Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd supposedly started out a Shīʿite, but after moving to Baghdad became more moderate in his views, a Muʿtazilite with pro-ʿAlid leanings. But he has also been described as first a Muʿtazilite and then a Shīʿite. As with Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, this confusion leads Vaglieri to conclude "a thorough and impartial examination of the many polemical passages in his *Sharḥ nahj al-balāghah* will be necessary before his thought can be better understood and a sounder assessment made of him; it may, however, be taken as certain that he was not an Imāmī."[60] An analysis of his section on the caliphate of ʿUthmān in the *Sharḥ nahj al-balāghah* confirms the image of a scholar of complex, but not Imāmi, or strictly Shīʿite, views.

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[58] Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols*, 365-368.

[59] LauraVeccia Vaglieri, "Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd," *EI²*. Vaglieri notes, "Attention should be drawn to the historical excurses, because the author has inserted in his commentary long passages from monographs either earlier than al-Ṭabarī or not used by him." Ibid.

Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd's narrative of ʿUthmān consists of eleven points of controversy from his caliphate presented in an argument, counter-argument, rebuttal format. Significantly, each point begins with an "accusation" against ʿUthmān from the "qaḍī al-quḍā'" followed by a defense, usually introduced as "people say," followed by a rebuttal that shows why these fail to justify ʿUthmān's behavior.[61] The argument, counter-argument, rebuttal format suggests ongoing debate, while the argumentative and ironic tone gives a sense of the flavor of the debate as well as indicating some of the ways scholars could insert their own voices into old forms.[62] In fact the format of his narrative is reminiscent of al-Jāḥiẓ.[63]

Like al-Jāḥiẓ, Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd uses logic (and sarcasm) to expose the inadequacies of commonly held views. However, whereas al-Jāḥiẓ used his skills against the pro-ʿAlids, Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd exposes the weaknesses in the Sunnī defense of ʿUthmān. Nevertheless, after eleven criticisms, Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd concludes the entire section with a defense of ʿUthmān. He does not deny ʿUthmān's guilt, rather he argues ʿUthmān's faults were forgivable and indeed had to have been because ʿUthmān was among those to whom Muḥammad promised a place in Paradise.

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[60] Ibid. Yet he always refers to ʿAlī as "*amīr al-mu'minīn*" and when he blesses the Prophet he also blesses the people of his house.

[61] He bases these counter-arguments primarily on al-Wāqidī and Abū Mikhnaf.

[62] He may have been bringing into more mainstream Sunnī discourse a common Shīʿite structure.

[63] Those trying to label his philosophical and religious views also note a similarity with al-Jāḥiẓ. See Vaglieri, "Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd."

Relying on al-Jāḥiẓ's style to reach different conclusions, but falling back on Sunnī *ḥadīth* as the final authority, Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd's narrative of ʿUthmān reflects the complexity of his age.

The eleven points of debate presented by Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd are that ʿUthmān: 1) favored his relatives, 2) brought back those whom Muḥammad had exiled, 3) favored his family with money from the public treasury and married off his daughters and gave their husbands huge sums, 4) redistributed public grazing land, 5), used the treasury for private purposes, 6) had ʿAbdallāh b. Masʿūd beaten until his stomach split open, 7) collected the Qur'ān into a uniform reading and burned the others, 8) had ʿAmmār b. Yāsir beaten, 9) exiled and beat Abū Dharr, 10) failed to kill ʿUmar's assassins, and 11) was not defended by the Companions nor did they bury him for three days. The first and last points are by far the most detailed and intriguing; I will restrict my analysis to these, having stated that he deals with the other points in similar fashion.[64]

Under the accusation of ʿUthmān's government appointments, Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd actually deals with much of the controversy surrounding the revolt against ʿUthmān including the letter to the Egyptian governor and the events of the siege. The first accusation lodged against ʿUthmān is that he favored his relatives, which was exactly what ʿUmar had warned him not to do.[65] Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd then mentions the abuses of ʿUthmān's governors, culminating in the letter to the Egyptian governor.

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[64] The first point makes up around twenty pages of text, the final point seven pages, while the others range from one to a few pages.
[65] Note that these controversies surround his caliphate, not his appointment as caliph.

According to Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd this event "increased the size of the group [against him] and was the reason for the siege and murder."[66] All of these points are consistent with criticisms made against ʿUthmān in the Sunnī narratives of the ninth century, even if they were sublimated in the eleventh and twelfth. He moves on to give the standard defenses for ʿUthmān, the defenses that focus on the rights and wrongs of the behavior of the two sides. Nothing is said about appeals to a unified community, unsheathed swords, or shirts of authority.

These defenses either offer contrary evidence or different interpretations of the damning evidence. For example, when ʿUthmān learned of the problems with his governors he knew he needed to remove them and "that is exactly what he did."[67] The defense continues by stating it was not wrong for ʿUthmān to appoint relatives since he did so based on their ability, not their family relationship.[68] Regarding the letter, ʿUthmān denied any knowledge of it and it was recognized at the time to be a forgery and the work of Marwān. Moreover, ʿUthmān did not turn Marwān over to the crowd because he would not have received justice or the appropriate punishment because the mob would have killed him without a trial.[69] Consequently, it is clear ʿUthmān did not deserve death or removal and they were wrong for gathering against him and they proved this when they denied him food and water. This made all the actions of the besiegers unjust; they did something not even an unbeliever would do.[70]

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[66] Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd, 12.
[67] Ibid., 13.
[68] Ibid., 13-14.
[69] Ibid., 14.
[70] He adds that ʿAlī refused to withhold water from his opponents at the Battle of Siffīn. Ibid., 15.

If the behavior of the besiegers revealed who was just and unjust, the events of the murder certainly confirmed it.

The defense of ʿUthmān contrasts his pacifism with the attackers' aggression, while also pointing out the Companions were not among the attackers. The murderers burned their way into ʿUthmān's house and stabbed him while he was defenseless and did not resist. They cut his wife's hand when she tried to defend him and then ransacked his house. The defense makes the point that not even unbelievers would behave in such a way, so how can it be possible that the Companions did so.[71] The defense continues by returning to the pivotal letter, stating it did not justify such behavior because ʿUthmān not only denied it, but repented for any wrong he may have done. Consequently, there was no justification for storming the holy city and the *haram*.[72] The final point of defense conveyed "in the stories" was that the *anṣār* and ʿAlī's son, al-Ḥasan, were with ʿUthmān. But ʿUthmān insisted that they should not fight and should sheath their swords and sent them away so that only his wives (and servants, who were also told to sheath their swords) were with him. ʿAlī proclaimed that he was innocent of ʿUthmān's blood.[73] These are standard Sunnī defenses, but restricted to the moral behavior of individuals rather than appeals to abstract political principles.

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[71] Ibid.

[72] This esteem for the holy cities and the *haram* is reminiscent of the heightened regard for them discussed above and again below.

[73] Ibid., 16.

Ibn Abīʾl-Ḥadīd's rebuttal relies on counter-evidence and logic to condemn ʿUthmān's behavior more than his caliphate.[74] The problem with ʿUthmān's appointments was not that they were his relatives per se, but that they were known to have "blameworthy characters" and were among those whose "behavior was evil."[75] For example, al-Walīd was known for his "sinfulness" and "dissipation" before ʿUthmān appointed him. Moreover, this was general knowledge and ʿUthmān must have known about it.[76] As for punishing al-Walīd, ʿUthmān did this only after many abuses and complaints.[77] Furthermore, al-Wāqidī records that when witnesses came against al-Walīd, ʿUthmān had *them* whipped. And it was only when Ṭalḥah, al-Zubayr, and ʿĀʾishah all confronted him that he was willing to perform the *ḥadd* punishment. And even then when the jailer went to do it, al-Walīd threatened him that he would receive ʿUthmān's wrath. Ultimately it was ʿAlī who carried out the punishment.[78] Ibn Abīʾl-Ḥadīd points out that all this clearly undermines any offer on ʿUthmān's part to remove governors or apologize.[79]

Ibn Abīʾl-Ḥadīd similarly refutes the defenses for ʿUthmān regarding the letter and his behavior during the siege. He states that as for ʿUthmān's denial of the letter, even ʿUthmān had to admit the letter was found with his camel, servant, and signet ring.[80] Along with ʿUthmān's accusers, Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd wants to know how this could have happened without ʿUthmān knowing about it.[81] He then includes the Egyptians' response to ʿUthmān that even if he had not ordered the letter, the fact that it could have happened shows his weakness and that this was reason enough for him to step down from the caliphate.[82] Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd further undermines ʿUthmān's position with a response which notes that if ʿUthmān was so innocent why did he keep apologizing. And even if he was sincere (although not likely) when he claimed the letter was forged, the camel and servant could not have been, and it was all very suspect. More suspicious still is the fact that he did not make any investigation to find out how this happened. He concludes ʿUthmān did not do this because "he [was] afraid he [would] be exposed."[83] These are logical defenses for the siege, but how does he defend the murder of a caliph and a Companion?

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[74] He begins his rebuttal, "al-Murtaḍī rejected [these arguments] and may God almighty bless this speech." Ibid., 20. Shaykhs al-Rāḍī and al-Murtaḍī are critical fourth/tenth century figures in the development of Twelver Shīʿism.
[75] Ibid., 21.
[76] Ibid., 17.
[77] Ibid., 18.
[78] Ibid., 19-20.
[79] Ibid., 20.

Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd's response was that although murder was not a part of the original plan, ʿUthmān's own behavior justified it. He argues the besiegers cut off food and water in order to force ʿUthmān to do what he should have done, namely step down.[84] They did this because they did not want to kill him; it was only the approaching "armies" that forced them to act and brought about the "great schism" and "horrible calamity."[85] Although Ibn Abī'l-Hadīd acknowledges the significance of the act, he also downplays it by reiterating that it is acceptable to kill in self defense, which by that point was what they were doing.[86] Finally, he rejects the notion that ʿUthmān's repentance made his murder unjust because ʿUthmān had done so several times and then always reverted to his previous behavior. How could they trust him not to do it again?[87]

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[80] Ibid., 21. The letter ordered his governor "to kill Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr and his companions."

[81] Ibid., 22. He also holds against ʿUthmān the account in which ʿUthmān supposedly blamed his scribe and ʿAlī for forging the letter. Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd goes on to defend ʿAlī by briefly noting the occasions when ʿAlī intervened on ʿUthmān's behalf and calmed down the crowd. He also says the script was Marwān's and he and ʿAlī were enemies so it is inconceivable that they would have been acting together. Ibid., 23.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Ibid., 24. Although he might be making a larger political statement here, the sense is not for a general openness to the possibility of a caliph resigning, but that ʿAlī was the better candidate. ʿAlī's virtue is attested to by the fact that he was opposed to the siege and when he found out he had water brought to ʿUthmān.

Whereas ʿUthmān's defenders point to the support of the Companions as proof that ʿUthmān's murder was unjust, his detractors point to the Companions as proof that it was justified. Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd states the Companions and family of the Prophet were opposed to ʿUthmān from the very beginning. And as the situation unfolded they removed themselves from his affairs. They neither defended ʿUthmān nor attacked him. In fact, he points out they must have removed themselves, for how else could the group of Egyptians have taken the city?[88] He repeats that ʿAlī distanced himself from the whole situation, and therefore would not have sent his son to help ʿUthmān. He asserts that the fact that ʿUthmān was deserted is recorded in al-Wāqidī and is corroborated by other accounts. For example, al-Waqidī also records that Muḥammad b. Maslamah (the other known defender of ʿUthmān) was dying while ʿUthmān was besieged and when word came to him of ʿUthmān's death he said, "He killed himself."[89] Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd concludes the section with the statement that the words of ʿAlī (*amīr al-mu'minīn*), Ṭalḥah, al-Zubayr, and ʿĀ'ishah are all in agreement on this matter and if anyone wants more details and explanations he should look to the book of al-Wāqidī for he has "recounted his history and others like him without exaggeration."[90] He deals in an equally devastating manner with each accusation and attempted defense.

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[85] Ibid., 25.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid., 26.
[88] Ibid., 27.
[89] Ibid., 28.

Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd's final point returns to the critical issue of the role of the Companions and their response to ʿUthmān's murder. The final accusation addresses whether the Companions who did not defend ʿUthmān, keep him from being besieged, or bury him for three days were in the wrong.[91] His first point is that ʿAlī said, "God killed him and I am with Him," making the behavior of the Companions appropriate.[92] The Sunnī counter-position is that the Companions did not abandon ʿUthmān and buried him that night. Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd refutes this and restates the original three day story. He also gives further support for ʿAlī's statement about being "with God." He gives an exposition of the saying that when ʿAlī heard of ʿUthmān's death he said: "I did not love his death nor did I hate it." Now the criticism is that if his death was really of God, how could he not "love it?" But Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd responds that it means that he did not cause it or take part in it. And as for not hating it, it means simply, "he did not hate ʿUthmān in all circumstances and in every way."[93] These reports are in al-Balādhurī. It is not clear whether Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd is using al-Wāqidī or al-Balādhurī. But, as with his use of al-Jāḥiẓ, it does mark a new engagement with some of the sources and debates from the ninth century.

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[90] Ibid., 29.
[91] Ibid., 62-9.
[92] Ibid., 63.
[93] Ibid., 67.

Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd's final defense of ʿUthmān is based not on appeals to justice or unity, but *ḥadīth*. He concludes his section on ʿUthmān by stating: "The response to these defamations is from two sides: complete and detailed."[94] He does not deny that ʿUthmān did blameworthy things in the eyes of most Muslims, but they did not "reach the level of sin, nor negate his good deeds. They are among the small things (*ṣaghā'ir*) that fall under repentance because we know that he is forgiven and is among the people of Paradise."[95] He continues by providing support from three sources:

> First is that the Prophet said he was a participant at Badr even though it is known that he was not at Badr, Muḥammad gave him that distinction because he was taking care of his wife, Muḥammad's daughter. Second, he was among those who gave the *bayʿa* of Riḍwān. Even though he was not there, it was because Muḥammad sent him to Mecca and he later gave Muḥammad a personal *bayʿa* under the tree. And third, he was among the ten who the accounts say belong to the people of Paradise.[96]

In this, his concluding defense, Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd combines reminders of ʿUthmān's shortcomings with assertions of his acceptance by Muḥammad. His narrative highlights several points of continuity and discontinuity in the thirteenth century.

On the one hand, his critical, yet ambivalent, tone is consistent with other works from the first half of the century, but hard to imagine in the second half. Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd was killed in the siege of Baghdad. His life and his work mark the passing of an era. The Mongol advance and eventual halt at the Battle of ʿAyn Jalūt (658/1260) produced a radically different religio-political alignment. Subsequently, there was much less room for religious ambiguity or political indifference. On the other hand, Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd's narrative reflects creative re-use of early Islamic historical sources. He applied al-Jāḥiẓ's rhetorical method to reach different conclusions. Likewise, his division of the narrative of ʿUthmān into chapters corresponding to points of contention will be used by Muḥibb al-Dīn and Ibn Abī Bakr, albeit with very different results. Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd's conclusion also reflects the growing significance of the *ḥadīth al-ʿasharah*, in which Muḥmmad designated ten Qurayshī Companions as members of Paradise. A comparative analysis with the narrative of ʿUthmān in Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Ṭabarī's *Al-Riyāḍ al-naḍirah fī manāqib al-ʿasharah*, praise of the ten promised Paradise, further illustrates the points of continuity and discontinuity in the content and form of medieval Islamic historical discourse about ʿUthmān.

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[94] Ibid., 68.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid., 68-9.

MUḤIBB AL-DĪN AL-ṬABARĪ

Abū Jaʿfar Aḥmad Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Ṭabarī (d. 694/1295) was a Shāfiʿī scholar considered to be the greatest scholar of his age in the Hijaz.[97] He appears to have been educated essentially in Mecca where his principal teachers were Ḥanbalī, Mālikī, and Shāfiʿī traditionists. The narrative on ʿUthmān in his *Al-Riyāḍ al-naḍirah fī manāqib al-ʿasharah* brings together stylistic aspects from different predecessors to produce a unique, new narrative.[98] At the beginning of volume one he lists his sources which include Ibn Ḥanbal's *Faḍā'il ʿUthmān*,[99] and his *Faḍā'il ʿAlī*, Ibn al-Athīr, Ibn ʿAsākir, and Ibn al-Jawzī. Unlike many of the biographers before him, Muḥibb al-Dīn confronts the blameworthy acts of ʿUthmān. Like Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd, he presents them in a debate format; however, Muḥibb al-Dīn ends with points in ʿUthmān's defense, without a final rebuttal. Muḥibb al-Dīn also relies on *ḥadīth* for the final pronouncement on ʿUthmān. However, he relies on different *ḥadīth*, ones that defend ʿUthmān vis-à-vis the *fitnah* and his murder. He blames the *fitnah* and murder on the Shīʿites (*Rawāfiḍ*) who destroy the unity of the community.

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[97] F. Bauden, "Al-Ṭabarī, Muḥibb al-Dīn," *EI²*.

[98] The first two volumes of *Al-Riyāḍ* are on the *Rāshidūn* Caliphs in which the author gives almost equal space to each, about one hundred pages.

The format of Muḥibb al-Dīn's narrative of ʿUthmān is reminiscent of Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd. Muḥibb al-Dīn divides his entry on ʿUthmān into twelve chapters, which are as follows: 1) *Nisbah*, 2) name and surname, 3) description, 4) conversion, 5) *hijrah*, 6) special characteristics (*khaṣā'iṣ*), 7) his excellence or preference (*afḍaliyah*) after ʿUmar, 8) the Prophet's testimony that he would be in Paradise, 9) virtues, 10) caliphate, 11) murder, 12) children. Most of these he deals with in a few pages each. However, the chapters on ʿUthmān's special characteristics and virtues make up forty pages of text.[100] The brief chapter on ʿUthmān's caliphate is actually about the *shūrā* and his right to the caliphate after ʿUmar. It is in the chapter on ᶜUthmān's murder that Muḥibb al-Dīn addresses nineteen points of controversy from ᶜUthmān's caliphate.

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[99] An edited edition of Ibn Ḥanbal's *Faḍā'il ʿUthmān* was recently published based on several manuscripts from the Maʿhad al-Makhṭuṭāt in Cairo. The primary manuscript's final transmission is from Abū'l-Ḥajjāj Yūsuf b. Khalīl b. ʿAbdallāh al-Damashqī in 635 A.H. Ibn Ḥanbal, *Faḍā'il ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān*, ed. Abū Maṣʿab (Jedda: Dar Mājid ʿAsīrī, 2000).

[100] Muḥibb al-Dīn, 11. Similar to Abū Nuʿaym and Ibn ʿAsākir, he relies on *ḥadīth* that tell of ʿUthmān's special relationship with Muḥammad and his praiseworthy attributes. These include that he married two daughters of the Prophet and that an angel told Muḥammad to marry his second daughter to him after the first died. Moreover, when she died as well, Muḥammad reportedly said if he had a hundred daughters he would marry them one by one to ʿUthmān. He includes a variant *ḥadīth* that give the number as forty. In either case this is clear embellishment from the ninth century *ḥadīth* in which Muḥammad said if he had another daughter he would marry her to ʿUthmān.

The final section in the chapter on ᶜUthmān's murder is subtitled: "Mention of what was held against ᶜUthmān and his defense," in which Muḥibb al-Dīn gives a list of criticisms against ᶜUthmān.[101] This list is very similar to the one found in Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd. ᶜUthmān removed Companions of the Prophet; misused public treasury money for his family; increased the fenced in pasture land in Medina and kept it from the people; gave many *iqṭāᶜs* to his friends from the lands of Islam;[102] exiled groups from the leaders of the Companions from their countries (among them Abū Dharr al-Ghifarī); had al-ᶜAmmār beaten until his stomach split open when he came with a list of complaints against ᶜUthmān written up by a group of fifty men from the *anṣār* and *muhājirūn*; burned the Qur'ān of Ibn Mas'ūd and imposed a uniform text on the people according to the version of Zayd b. Thābit; changed how he concluded the congregational prayer; went away from prescribed religious duties; went back on his promise when he told the Egyptians he would appoint Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr as their governor and then wrote the letter ordering to have his hands and feet cut off. This last, the reader is then told, "was the reason the Egyptians returned to Medina, besieged, and murdered him."[103] Although there appear to be many legitimate complaints against ʿUthmān, it is only the last one that is held up as the reason for the murder.

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[101] Ibid., 82-88.

[102] In the medieval period an *iqṭāᶜ* was a piece of land given by the sulṭān to an amīr. The amīr was entitled to any revenues made from the land, but was expected to use these revenues to sustain a certain number of troops that could be called into service by the sulṭān. Very prevalent in Ayyūbid and Mamlūk times, it is anachronistic to describe such a system in place in the first Islamic century.

[103] Ibid., 88.

Muḥibb al-Dīn quickly dismisses the letter as a forgery and relies on *ḥadīth* to prove further that ʿUthmān's murder was unjust.[104] The very first report in the chapter on his murder is a *ḥadīth* in which Muḥammad predicted ʿUthmān would be killed unjustly.[105] This *ḥadīth* appears to be for Muḥibb al-Dīn the essential point that excuses ʿUthmān. Placed at the beginning of the chapter, everything else must be seen in light of it. Furthermore, ʿUthmān did not step down or defend himself because he was keeping his promise to Muḥammad to endure his trial patiently.[106] Similarly, the closing context of the murder consists of several flashbacks in which ʿUthmān looked down on the crowd and reminded them it was only permissible to kill a fellow Muslim for one of three reasons.[107] Finally, although ʿUthmān could have rightfully defended himself,[108] he died voluntarily, because when, in his dream, Muḥammad gave him the choice of victory or breakfasting with Muḥammad in Paradise, ʿUthmān chose Paradise.[109]

Not only does Muḥibb al-Dīn rely on *ḥadīths* to frame ʿUthmān's murder, he uses them to contextualize ʿUthmān's caliphate as a whole. He concludes that the best response to all the accusations against ʿUthmān is that Muḥammad predicted the *fitnah* and that ʿUthmān would be right in all matters.[110] Finally he refers to the "true *ḥadīth*" in which Muḥammad told ʿUthmān they would try to remove a shirt [of authority] placed on him by God and that he should not remove it; rather he should be patient.[111]

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[104] Ibid., 65 and 100. His arguments appear in the chapter on the murder itself entitled, "On (ʿUthmān's) murder and what is related about it from the account of the testimony of the Prophet" (57) and in the subsection, "Arrival of the Egyptians and others who joined forces in his death," (59) and then again in the conclusion of the biography as a response to the list of accusations, (100-102).

[105] Ibid., 57.

[106] Ibid., 59. It is at this point that Muḥibb al-Dīn provides two lengthy accounts of the murder itself.

[107] Ibid., 65. He also includes the defense that he who kills a prophet will bring about the death of 70,000 and a caliph, 35,000 (72). Or if they kill ʿUthmān the community will not be unified again until the Day of Judgment (73). Muḥibb al-Dīn does not include the besiegers' response about ʿUthmān being a test from God.

[108] Ibid., 67.

[109] Ibid.

Muḥibb al-Dīn relies primarily on *ḥadīth* for his interpretive framework, but he also uses common sense and the importance of the unity of the community to defend ʿUthmān and his caliphate. In terms of ʿUthmān's misuse of money, Muḥibb al-Dīn points out that the accusation makes no sense since ʿUthmān was well known to have been one of the richest Companions.[112] And as for changing the prayers, the jurists (*faqīh*, pl. *fuqahāʾ*) have discussed it and although there is disagreement among the legal schools, there is also agreement that it did not constitute unbelief or corruption.[113] Many of ʿUthmān's other actions are placed within the context of avoiding *fitnah*. For example, "destroying" the Qurʾān, or rather, standardizing it, was to avoid one Companion saying to another "My Qurʾān is better than yours."[114] Similarly, ʿUthmān may have treated some people roughly, but they were encouraging *fitnah*, and therefore deserved whatever punishment befell them.[115] These are all common defenses for ʿUthmān. What is more intriguing is the way Muḥibb al-Dīn blames the accusations against ʿUthmān on the *Rawāfiḍ*.

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[110] Ibid., 101.
[111] Ibid., 102.
[112] Ibid., 91-2.
[113] Ibid., 100-1.
[114] Ibid., 99.
[115] Ibid.

It is clear that Muḥibb al-Dīn is concerned not only with defending ʿUthmān, but condemning Shīʿism. He blames the accusations against ʿUthmān on the *Rawāfiḍ*. For example, ʿUthmān was accused of changing governors, but he only removed ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ because the *Rawāfiḍ* accused him of being a "hypocrite in religion."[116] Muḥibb al-Dīn also claims many other accusations are based on half-truths and are only parts of the story lacking the full context. He blames the *Rawāfiḍ* and the *Khawārij* for taking out the additional details.[117] He further undermines the Shīʿite position by showing how ʿAlī and other key Companions supported ʿUthmān. However, like earlier narrators from the third/ninth century, Muḥibb al-Dīn balances their support with their criticism of ʿUthmān.

In the chapter on ʿUthmān's right to the caliphate neither ʿAlī nor ʿUthmān appears as an ideal candidate.[118] ʿAlī was not chosen because Ibn ʿAwf was afraid ʿAlī would make innovations. When Ibn ʿAwf asked ʿAlī if he would follow in the path of his two predecessors, ʿAlī responded: "And the application of my own opinion (*wa ijtihād ra'ī*)."[119] In this way the fact that ʿAlī was not chosen is based on perceived flaws in his commitment to the community, rather than some conspiracy among the *shūrā* members. Although this is fairly common in the narratives, much less common is the conclusion of the account, which states that ʿUthmān "followed the conduct of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar for a time and then took liberties with the permissible things that they could not accept until they rejected him."[120] This statement forms a striking balance, acknowledging that ʿUthmān's innovations were among the "permissible things," while at the same time including a note of censure that ʿUthmān "took liberties" and went against what the majority of the community wanted. But Muḥibb al-Dīn is comfortable with only so much tension; the last account in the chapter asserts ʿUthmān's selection was based on unanimous agreement.

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[116] Ibid., 90 He also claims that the *Rawāfiḍ* complained about ʿUthmān replacing his governor in Kufa when they were the ones who accused him of being an unbeliever.
[117] Ibid., 91-2, 94.
[118] Muḥibb al-Dīn begins by stating he will address "not only statements and intimations, but also ambiguous and complicated events." Ibid., 51.
[119] Ibid., 53.

Muḥibb al-Dīn strikes a similar balance in his presentation of the Companions' support for ʿUthmān. On the one hand, they, especially ʿAlī, supported ʿUthmān throughout his caliphate. ʿAlī sent water to ʿUthmān when he was besieged,[121] and, along with other Companions, sent his sons to guard ʿUthmān. When word reached ʿAlī that ʿUthmān was "slaughtered," he went crazy and struck his sons, and cursed Muḥammad b. Ṭalḥah, and struck ʿAbdallāh b. al-Zubayr. ʿAlī, furthermore, defended ʿUthmān's decision not to turn over Marwān because he would have been killed before he could have received a proper trial. There is no excuse for ʿUthmān's murder. Muḥibb al-Dīn does not deny that ʿUthmān made mistakes. He includes an account in which ʿAlī does not warn ʿUthmān to be just, but to follow the example of his predecessors and not to appoint those whom the people hated.[122] The account continues, however, by stating that even when ʿUthmān did not take this advice and the people joined against him, ʿAlī still urged him to defend himself and offered to defend him as well. ʿUthmān, however, refused.[123] Muḥibb al-Dīn presents both sides in ʿUthmān's controversial caliphate, but always concludes with a defense for ʿUthmān.

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[120] Ibid., 54.

[121] Ibid., 65.

[122] Ibid., 70. Muḥibb al-Dīn also notes that ʿUthmān repented "for what they held against him."

Muḥibb al-Dīn's defense for ʿUthmān is closely linked with his rejection of the *Rawāfiḍ*, and both are linked to his emphasis on the unity of the community. The *Rawāfiḍ* are not only guilty of later exaggerations about ʿAlī's precedence among the Companions, but of actually causing the revolt against ʿUthmān. ʿUthmān's questionable behavior did not justify rebellion, as ʿAlī's own support demonstrated. Furthermore, ʿUthmān's murder was a tragedy not only because it was not justifiable or because ʿUthmān was a close Companion of the Prophet, but because it marked the community abandoning its foundations of unity, signified by commitment to its leader. Muḥibb al-Dīn includes a variation of an account seen earlier in Ibn Saʿd and others in which Ibn ʿUmar advised ʿUthmān not to step down because it would introduce a bad precedent. In *Al-Riyāḍ al-naḍirah*, according to Ibn ʿUmar it is a bad precedent because it makes the Muslims just like the Persians and the Byzantines, who, he said, "Do not renounce their amīr without killing him."[124] Then four tears appeared in his eyes and he said: "By God you do not want that." The way to avoid this is not to pursue justice -- Muḥibb al-Dīn hardly mentions the concept -- but to remain loyal to the ruler. These are the Companions and their successors, not the people of Muḥammad's family.

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[123] Ibid., 71-2. And after the murder ʿAlī declared he was innocent of ʿUthmān's blood in various accounts by numerous authorities. He also proclaimed God's curse was on whoever killed ʿUthmān. Ibid., 78-9.
[124] Ibid., 58.

In Muḥibb al-Dīn's chapter on ʿUthmān's virtues, he includes a subsection entitled "what ʿAlī said about ʿUthmān."[125] In it he includes the fairly common report illustrating ʿAlī's support for ʿUthmān in which ʿAlī cites the verse: "We shall cast out any grudge they may have in their hearts. (There) they will sit on couches face to face like brothers together," as referring to himself and ʿUthmān.[126] However, one of the last reports in the chapter I have not seen elsewhere. It addresses the inconsistencies pointed out by Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd regarding ʿAlī's decision to remove himself from the siege while sending his sons in his place. According to Muḥibb al-Dīn's report, ʿAlī went out from *(khārij)* ʿUthmān and, seeing Ḥasan at the door, asked him to accompany him. Al-Ḥasan refused and ʿAlī responded: "Do I not have the right of a parent?" To which al-Ḥasan replied: "The right of a caliph is greater than that of a parent."[127] This puts into the mouth of one of the *ahl al-bayt* the Sunnī position that loyalty to the caliph is paramount, superseding commitment to the family, even the family of the Prophet. This is the main thrust of Muḥibb al-Dīn's entire argument.

Muḥibb al-Dīn begins *Al-Riyāḍ al-naḍirah* with *ḥadīths* and *akhbār* that praise the ten as a group, the first four caliphs, and then the first three.[128] These include accounts in which Muḥammad said that in Paradise he would be seated between Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, and ʿUthmān and that he had a friend and two martyrs.[129]

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[125] Muḥibb al-Dīn has taken this from Ibn Ḥanbal.

[126] Ibid., 48-9; Q 15:47.

[127] Ibid., 50.

[128] Muḥibb al-Dīn, vol. I, 47-55. Significantly, many of the *ḥadīth* praising the first three caliphs and placing them in order of virtue are based on the authority of ʿAlī.

[129] Ibid., 65.

He also includes a report in which ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭalib addressed "the people of Iraq," criticizing them for mingling their love of Islam with hatred for Abū Bakr and ʿUmar. He equated this with hypocrisy, apostasy, deviation, and disloyalty.[130] Similarly, al-Ḥusayn stated that those who doubted Abū Bakr and ʿUmar were like those who doubted the *sunnah* of the Prophet, and those who hated them were hypocrites just as those who hated the *anṣār* were hypocrites.[131] Another account states those who insulted Abū Bakr and ʿUmar were cursed by God and the angels.[132] These make a very strong argument, clearly equating Shīʿite views with rejecting Muḥammad himself and incurring damnation.[133] The section on the *Rāshidūn* Caliphs concludes with several *ḥadīths* that all emphasize Muḥammad did not appoint his family, but his Companions. Only after establishing this key premise, does Muḥibb al-Dīn turn to each one of the ten Companions individually.

Muḥibb al-Dīn's emphasis on the priority of the Companions and *ḥadīth* is in many ways reminiscent of earlier biographies; however, Muḥibb al-Dīn's narrative is hardly a laudatory account, free from controversy. It is clear that ʿUthmān made mistakes and that there were divisions in the community. Intriguingly, however, he attributes these to the *Rawāfiḍ*, rather than, say, the Sabāʾiyyah. Muḥibb al-Dīn seems to see everything through this Sunnī-Shīʿite conflict in which he is much more aggressive in pointing out the Shīʿites were the ones who destroyed, and continue to destroy, the unity of the community. Muḥibb al-Dīn's style and content may reflect the direct literary influence of Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd. They may also reflect larger trends in which earlier historical accounts were receiving renewed attention and the more controversial aspects of ʿUthmān's caliphate could not be ignored. The more engaged and aggressive style of Muḥibb al-Dīn's narrative very likely also reflects the Sunnī-Shīʿite tensions in the Hijaz in the second half of the seventh/thirteenth century.

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[130] Ibid., 67.
[131] Ibid., 68.
[132] Ibid.
[133] He continues with similar accounts that are addressed specifically to the "*Rāfiḍah*" (68-9)

MONGOLS & MAMLŪKS

> In Ramadan 654/September1256 the sanctuary of the Prophet burned to the ground. The only part of the mosque to be saved intact was the domed structure in the courtyard built by the twelfth-century Caliph al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh to store the *muṣḥaf ʿuthmānī*, the bloodstained copy of the Qurʾan which the Rightly Guided Caliph ʿUthmān had been reading when he was assassinated.[134]

Shaun Marmon continues by elaborating on how the impact of this catastrophe was intensified by the fact that it took place shortly after the Mongols had begun a major offensive against the Middle East. By the end of the year 656/1258 Baghdad itself was in flames.[135] The Mongols raized Baghdad and murdered the ʿAbbāsid caliph and his family. Although a survivor of the ʿAbbāsid house was later instated as caliph in Cairo, 656/1258 is generally regarded as the end of the ʿAbbāsid caliphate. Institution of the office in Cairo was clearly done on the initiative of the Mamlūks to further their own political objectives. From the beginning the caliph in Cairo was little more than a symbol, wheeled out for ceremonial occasions, but otherwise living a private life under the protection of the Mamlūk sulṭān. In light of such cataclysmic events one can only wonder how the survival of ʿUthmān's Qurʾān resonated in the imagination of the Muslims of the Hijaz.

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[134] Marmon, *Eunuchs*, 48.

[135] The amīr of Medina had turned to the ʿAbbāsid Caliph al-Mustaʿṣim for aid, but the caliph was executed by the Mongols before he could act on the promises of aid. Ibid.

The Muslims of the time certainly appear to have seen the disasters of the day as portents of divine judgment.[136] In the Sunnī texts, "treacherous Shiʿis, rebellious Christians, and a weak Sunni caliph led by a Shiʿi vizier were all held to have contributed to the devastation of much of the Islamic world by the Mongols."[137] The Shīʿite ʿAbbāsid viziers were blamed for colluding with the Mongols and some chroniclers interpreted al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh's earlier envoys to the Mongols as an invitation for invasion.[138] The anti-Shīʿite sentiment was felt particularly acutely in the Hijaz in which the rulers were Shīʿite descendents of Muḥammad, and the prominent *ʿulamāʾ* families were Shīʿite as well. However, Shīʿite fortunes in the region were undermined in the second half of the thirteenth century not only because of anti-Shīʿite sentiments stemming from the fall of Baghdad and the ʿAbbāsid Caliphate, but because of the active sunnification policies of the successors to the Ayyūbids, the Mamlūks of Egypt.

The Mamlūks had come to power in Cairo in 648/1250 after a military coup and assassination of the last Ayyūbid sulṭān. The Mamlūks consolidated their power and strengthened their legitimacy when they defeated the Mongols at the Battle of ʿAyn Jalūt in 658/1260. The Mamlūk Sulṭān, Baybars I (d. 676/1277), began a policy of religious purification which included extracting the Crusaders from the Palestinian coast and destroying lingering Ismāʾīlī communities in Syria. Baybars also sought to strengthen the Sunnī presence in the Hijaz. In 661/1263 he sent several missions to restore mosques and tombs and in 667/1269 he went on pilgrimage himself, announced a reconstruction of the sanctuary of the tomb of the Prophet, and appointed a high commissioner of Mecca.[139] He also sent Sunnī *ʿulamāʾ* and jurists to Medina, threatening the Banū Ḥusayn who had controlled the political and religious life of the city for centuries.

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[136] Ibid., 49.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Mason, *Two Statesmen*, 111.

We know that in the late thirteenth century, one of these Sunnī jurists, Sirāj al-Dīn al-Anṣārī, while attempting to preach from the Prophet's mosque in Medina had stones and pebbles thrown at him by the Shīʿite members of the congregation.[140] This event takes on great dramatic effect in the historiography and is portrayed as the battle between good and evil, the latter being the local Shīʿite rulers and *ʿulamāʾ* as well as the violent Shīʿite mob.[141] The image is also redolent of the siege of ʿUthmān in which he was knocked from the *minbar* by a stone throwing mob, only to be carried into his house unconscious, later to be murdered therein. More work may usefully be done on the relationship between the imaginative power of such moments in history and the literary production that channeled them into greater cultural capital.

It is possible that the anti-Shīʿite sentiment in the Hijaz, the literary style of Ibn Abīʾl-Ḥadīd and Muḥibb al-Dīn, a general sense of political crisis and religious renewal in the second half of the thirteenth century -- or all of the above -- inspired another significant text in the historiography of the rebellion against ʿUthmān. *Al-Tamhīd wa'l-bayān fī maqtal al-shahīd ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān* (*An introduction and elucidation of the murder of the martyr ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān*) was written in 699/1299 by Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Abī Bakr.[142] The *Tamhīd* is a unique text. It is the only known independent work of this kind on ʿUthmān after the *maqātil* (unnatural death, assassination) literature of the second/eighth and third/ninth centuries.[143] After the mid-ninth century *maqātil* literature became primarily a Shīʿite province and focused almost exclusively on the deaths of ʿAlī and al-Ḥusayn.[144] Sunnī writers in contrast, focused on the Companions of the Prophet (*al-ṣaḥābah*) as a group, the ten promised Paradise, or the *sīras* of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar as the surest counter-Shīʿite argument. This is not to say Sunnī authors did not write biographies of ʿUthmān and ʿAlī as well. But there is no evidence that these were *maqātil* pieces. Thus Ibn Abī Bakr's two-hundred and fifty page *maqtal ʿUthmān*, in which he appears to be establishing a martyr narrative to rival that of al-Ḥusayn at Karbala, is all the more intriguing.[145]

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[139] Laoust, *Les Schismes*, 252; Marmon, *Eunuchs*, 51.

[140] He was defended by the intervention of the eunuchs who guarded Muḥammad's tomb, also supported by the Mamlūk Sulṭān. Marmon, *Eunuchs*, 55.

[141] See Marmon, *Eunuchs*, for more on the sunnification policies of the Mamlūks, especially the role of the eunuchs.

TAMHĪD WA'L-BAYĀN FĪ MAQTAL AL-SHAHĪD ʿUTHMĀN

The *Tamhīd* does share some stylistic features with Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd and Muḥibb al-Dīn. Like them, Ibn Abī Bakr promises to clarify the situation while avoiding exaggeration. He also arranges his work into twelve chapters. While Muḥibb al-Dīn dedicates almost half his narrative to ʿUthmān's special characteristics and virtues, Ibn Abī Bakr's chapter arrangements suggest a greater concern with the revolt against ʿUthmān and the resulting divisions and violence within the community. Ibn Abī Bakr's chapters are as follows:

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[142] There is some uncertainly regarding the author of this text, which I turn to at the end of the chapter.
[143] Both Abū Mikhnaf and al-Wāqidī wrote a "*maqtal* ʿUthmān."
[144] Sebastian Günther, "*Maqātil* literature in Medieval Islam," *Journal of Arabic Literature* XXV (1994): 204.
[145] Ninety percent of the work is an extremely idealized portrayal of ʿUthmān and his caliphate, followed by a drawn out and dramatized version of his murder. The treatise concludes with a critique of the *Rawāfiḍ* in which, among other things, the author compares ʿUthmān's murder with al-Ḥusayn's.

1. His lineage, children and wives;
2. His conversion to Islam and pilgrimage;
3. The oath of loyalty and the story of his *shūrā*;
4. Treatment of his authority, what was held against him and what happened during his caliphate;
5. Those who set out against him and besieged him;
6. What was said by those who wanted to remove him and his response;
7. His murder and the site of his burial;
8. The extent of his *sunnah* and caliphate;
9. His characteristics and clothes;
10. His habits and virtues;
11. What the poets say about him, and
12. Proclamation of what happened to those who killed or defended him.

It is noteworthy that the events of ʿUthmān's caliphate are divided into chapters that highlight key points of confrontation. In these chapters Ibn Abī Bakr relies almost exclusively on accounts by Sayf b. ʿUmar that defend ʿUthmān, presenting an extremely one-sided view. Furthermore, some of these accounts do not appear in al-Ṭabarī, suggesting a renewed interest in the earliest sources.[146] Nor is his laudatory narrative a repetition of earlier models of biography. For the narrative is based far more on historical *akhbār* than *ḥadīths*. Moreover, in the final chapter Ibn Abī Bakr goes on the offensive, relying on al-Jāḥiẓ in order to attack the *Rawāfiḍ*, or Shīʿite, heresies. In this section, he too, often resorts to an argument, counter-argument format.

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[146] This is similar to Abī'l-Ḥadīd's apparent interest in al-Wāqidī and Abū Mikhnaf rather than merely their recensions in al-Ṭabarī or al-Balādhurī. Ibn Abī Bakr also gives full *isnāds* for all his accounts.

The manuscript is part hagiographic biography,[147] part history, and part religious tract. The only known manuscript copy of this work is in the Dār al-Kutub archive in Cairo, Egypt and dates from the Ottoman period. The manuscript was edited and published in 1964 by Maḥmūd Yūsuf Zāyid, a professor at the American University in Beirut.[148] Significantly, he does not publish the last fourteen pages of the manuscript that deal with the *Rawāfiḍ*. Zāyid acknowledges in his introduction that he has not included this section, stating he has chosen to focus on the material that deals directly with ʿUthmān.[149] This is quite a remarkable editorial decision, however, and I cannot help but wonder if the political situation in Beirut in the 1960s did not in some way influence his decision.

From the very beginning of the text Ibn Abī Bakr is clearly concerned with the divisions within the Islamic Community – divisions that stemmed from the revolt against ʿUthmān. The entire work is a vindication not only of ʿUthmān, but of the first generation of Muslims as well. Thus the divisions and trials that assail the community are due to heretical fringe groups who either caused the revolt or later misrepresented the reasons for it.[150] On the cover sheet of the manuscript is the following account:

> ʿAbdallah b. Salām came to ʿUthmān [while he was besieged] and ʿUthmān said to him, "What brought you?" And he replied, "I came to assist you."

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[147] This term seems appropriate even though the author does not attribute anything supernatural to ʿUthmān, which Sebastian Günther suggested to me is one of the distinguishing marks of hagiographical material.
[148] Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Abī Bakr al-Ashʿarī, *Al-Tamhīd wa'l-bayān fī maqtal al-shahīd ʿUthmān ibn ʿAffān*, ed. Maḥmūd Yūsuf Zāyid (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfah, 1964).
[149] Besides the *Rawāfiḍ* material, I believe Zāyid gives a reliable presentation of the manuscript.
[150] Unlike Muḥibb al-Dīn, he accuses the *Rawāfiḍ* of later exaggerations, but not of the revolt against ʿUthmān.

> Then (ʿUthmān) said, "Go out to the people." Then (he went out) and said to them, "God (has) a sheathed sword and verily the angels have surrounded you in your city in which the Messenger of God resides. God is with this man, and by God if you kill him then the angels will attack your protégés and God will pull out His sheathed sword against you and it will not be re-sheathed until the Day of Judgment." They said, "Were not the Jews killed?" Then they killed him and went out and separated. For when a Prophet is killed [the community will not be reconciled by God] until 70,000 have been killed and if a successor (*khalīfah*) is killed [they will not be reconciled] until 35,000 have been killed.

Below this account is the seal and a date (neither of which are decipherable) and the text proper begins on the following page. It is not clear whether the tradition on this first page was a part of the original manuscript or added by the Ottoman copyist.[151] Two variations of this tradition appear, however, within the body of the work.[152]

The version of the tradition on the cover leaf concludes by stating the explanation for this is in Sūrat al-Nūr. Most of Sūrat al-Nūr deals with proper domestic behavior that could possibly be extended metaphorically to proper political practice. Another interpretation is found in verses 46-50, that state:

> We have surely sent down clear signs. It is God who guides whom He will to the path that is straight. They say they believe in God and the Prophet, and have come to believe, yet a section of them turns back even after this; and these are not believers. When they are called to God and his Prophet, that he may judge between them, a section of them turns away. Had right been on their side they would have come to him submissively. Is there a malady in their hearts, or are they deluded or afraid that God and His Prophet would be unjust in dealing with them? Not so; they are themselves unjust.

The idea that those who turn away from obedience are unbelievers concurs with Ibn Abī Bakr's treatment of the revolt. He begins by defending ʿUthmān and the

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[151] Zāyid does not include it in his edition.

[152] A variation of this account also appears in al-Balādhurī, Ibn ʿAsakir, al-Dhahabī, Ibn Aʿtham, and others, although not, I believe, in Sayf b. ʿUmar.

Companions and concludes by condemning the *Rawāfiḍ*, who criticize the Companions and are therefore unbelievers.

On page one of the manuscript, after giving praise to God, Ibn Abī Bakr summarizes the content of his work as follows: "In this book I recall the death (*maṣraᶜ*) of the martyred imām of the two lights, ᶜUthmān b. ᶜAffān, and his circumstances and some of his just conduct, and this without divergence and partisan fanaticism. Rather I relate what the community of *ᶜulamāʾ* have transmitted in their books and histories."[153] His claim to avoid "partisan fanaticism" suggests that defusing the revolt against ᶜUthmān as a source of political and religious factionalism is part of the reason for his writing the work in the first place. Claiming to present an unbiased survey of the literature, he goes on to name some of his sources, namely, Ibn Saᶜd's *Ṭabaqāt*, Sayf b. ᶜUmar's *Kitāb al-riddah*, Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Ḥusayn's *Kitāb al-sharīᶜah*, Ibn al-Athīr's *Taʾrīkh*, "and others."[154] Unlike Ibn al-Athīr, Ibn Abī Bakr provides the chains of transmission for most of his accounts, and it is through these that we can gauge more accurately his intent by analyzing which particular accounts he chose from the sources available to him.

In the sections on ᶜUthmān's conversion, *hijrah*, and virtues, Ibn Abī Bakr relies on *ḥadīth* predominantly from al-Bukhārī and Ibn Ḥanbal. These tell of ᶜUthmān's early conversion, double *hijrah*,[155] marriage to two daughters of the Prophet, and Muḥammad's high regard for him. In addition, Ibn Abī Bakr includes the defenses for ʿUthmān linked with the unity of the community: ʿUthmān's refusal to fight because he promised Muḥammad he would be patient and because he did not want to be the first to bring bloodshed into the Community; he chose to breakfast with Muḥammad in Paradise. In terms of the historical narrative of ʿUthmān's *shūrā*, caliphate, siege, and murder, Ibn Abī Bakr relies almost exclusively on accounts by Sayf b. ʿUmar. This presents an extremely positive portrayal of ʿUthmān and the Companions. He contrasts ʿUthmān's piety with the rebels' violence and greed; the rebels are members of the Sabāʾiyyah heresy and the rebellion is a product of their machinations. This should all be quite familiar at this point, but in order to recall what a one-sided and idealistic image the Sayf accounts alone portray, I will summarize briefly Ibn Abī Bakr's narrative of ʿUthmān's caliphate.

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[153] Ibn Abī Bakr, 1. From this point I will refer to only Zāyid's edition, until coming to the portion he does not include.

[154] Ibid, 1-2.

[155] That is ᶜUthmān was an early convert because he emigrated first to Africa, where the community fled to avoid persecution, and then to Medina.

In his *shūrā* narrative, Ibn Abī Bakr's focus is on showing a smooth transition of power. There is absolutely no reference to any division between the Companions of the Prophet over who ʿUmar's successor should be. Furthermore, he dedicates a good part of the chapter to ʿUmar himself and then Abū Bakr.[156] He is going out of his way to defend the order of the first four caliphs.[157] He uses a wide variety of sources that do not discuss the *shūrā* at all; rather they go directly to the oath of allegiance being given to ʿUthmān.[158] They summarize how many years he reigned and that he led the Pilgrimage in all of them, except the first and last. They point out that he unified and strengthened the Qurʾān and (more surprisingly) the study of *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence).[159] Everyone agreed on ʿUthmān, especially ʿAlī, and they gave him the oath of allegiance.[160] This is followed by several shorter accounts of ʿUthmān accepting the (unanimous) oath of allegiance and leading the people in prayer. That ʿUthmān was a worthy successor to ʿUmar is confirmed by his first sermon and letters to the governors, garrisons, and military commanders in which he emphasized the need to focus on the next life and pursue justice in this life.

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[156] He later includes a subsection entitled "the virtues of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb," but it would more accurately be titled "the virtues of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar." Ibid., 15-20.

[157] Ibid, 18. Indeed even ʿAlī's inclusion as one of the ten men promised Paradise seems dependent on his devotion to the first two caliphs rather than to any merit of his own. The account states: "The Prophet went out with ʿAli b. Abī Talib. Then Abū Bakr and ʿUmar greeted him and then he said, 'O ʿAlī do you love these two shaykhs?' He said, 'Yes.' (Muḥammad) said, 'With love for these two enter Paradise.'"

In his explanation for the revolt, by relying on Sayf's narrative, Ibn Abī Bakr emphasizes ʿUthmān's decisive leadership and blames the revolt on spreading heresy and discontent. In chapter four, "treatment of his authority and what was held against him and what happened during his caliphate,"[161] Ibn Abī Bakr addresses the political and religious complaints that are commonly held against ʿUthmān. Or rather he dismisses them. He relies on Sayf b. ʿUmar's accounts that describe the problems in the garrison towns of Kufa and Basra as stemming from personal antagonisms between leaders in those cities. ʿUthmān replaced the governors in an effort to solve these disputes and in response to the people's requests. It is never mentioned that the people he removed were Companions of the Prophet or that the men he appointed were members of his tribe or family, or that the people later held this against him. Instead, ʿUthmān comes across as a concerned ruler, doing all he could to ensure sound and just government. When problems continued and the people redirected their anger at ʿUthmān himself, rather than their governors, Ibn Abī Bakr attributes this to either the spread of religious heresies or the machinations of disgruntled ex-governors.[162]

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[158] Ibid., 10-11. Zāyid in his edition has inserted into his text the complete narratives from al-Bukhārī and Ibn Sʿad. In a later section subtitled, the "martyrdom of ʿUmar," Ibn Abī Bakr once again edits out the controversial middle section of a report from al-Ṭabarī. This account is identical in the beginning and end to the same subtitled section in al-Ṭabarī – except that Ibn Abī Bakr has removed the middle portion about debates and disagreements over whether ʿAlī or ʿUthmān was more worthy of the caliphate. Ibid., 20.
[159] Ibid., 14.
[160] Ibid.
[161] Ibid., 33-87.

In his chapter on the siege and murder, Ibn Abī Bakr contrasts ʿUthmān's piety with the attackers' violence. Whereas earlier Ibn Abī Bakr discredited the rebels as religious heretics, he now describes them as bandits motivated by bloodlust and greed. Ibn Abī Bakr continues to rely on the accounts by Sayf b. ʿUmar and presents a very dramatic picture of the murder. However, he also augments the Sayf accounts with others so that his narrative of the murder goes on for ten pages. He dwells for some time on the image of ʿUthmān weeping and praying as he read the Qur'ān and being able to recite the Qur'ān without making any mistakes despite the fierce battle that was raging around him.[163] He also draws out the details of the battle in order to emphasize the amount of support for ʿUthmān and the dedication of his defenders. He gives several accounts detailing how, when the rebels finally did break in, they were unable to kill ʿUthmān after they saw him and talked with him.[164] Once someone was finally able to strike the first blow, Ibn Abī Bakr contrasts ʿUthmān's piety and the attackers' brutality. They not only killed ʿUthmān, but molested his wives and ransacked his house and the public treasury.[165] His extremely negative portrayal of the murder reinforces the idea that it could not have been the act of the Companions.

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[162] The first group of besiegers was a part of the Sabā'iyyah heresy and confessed to coming intentionally to discredit ʿUthmān. Later, ʿAlī exposed the condemning letter to the Egyptian governor as a part of the group's schemes. Ibn Abī Bakr, 96.
[163] Ibid., 131; al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 213.
[164] Ibid., 135; al-Ṭabarī, *Crisis*, 214.

According to Ibn Abī Bakr, the virtue of the Companions required that they be unified, and unity requires loyalty to the leader. These connections are expressed clearly when Ibn Abī Bakr concludes the narrative of the murder with the account I have seen only in Ibn ʿAsākir and Sayf b. ʿUmar.[166] In it Ibn ʿAbbās quotes the verse: "To those who deny the signs of God, and slay the apostles unjustly, and slay the upholders of justice, give news of painful punishment."[167] Ibn ʿAbbās then stated, "Those who command justice among the people are those who are in authority among you, ʿUthmān and those like him."[168] The argument is that ʿUthmān was just, but even if he was not, he deserved obedience because he held a position of authority given him by God and disagreements should not be allowed to divide the community.

The chapter on ʿUthmān's conduct and virtues consists primarily of *ḥadīths* that defend ʿUthmān's behavior in office and his status among the Companions. These include the familiar canon on ʿUthmān's virtues and basically repeat the points made in the historical part of the narrative, but this time by Muḥammad himself.[169] The accounts also describe those involved in the siege and murder as hypocrites condemned to hell, while ʿUthmān was a martyr who "gave his blood for the Muslims."[170] Not only are ʿUthmān's killers condemned to hell, but anyone who criticizes ʿUthmān or denies the order of the first four Rightly Guided Caliphs is not a Muslim.[171] He is clearly directing his remarks towards Shīʿites; he goes on to say that anyone who prefers ʿAlī over Abū Bakr or ʿAlī over ʿUthmān is not a Muslim. There is no room for ambiguity or ambivalence in Ibn Abī Bakr's narrative when the consequences are salvation or damnation.[172] Consequently, Ibn Abī Bakr's treatise makes a natural transition from his defense of ʿUthmān to his attack of the *Rawāfiḍ*.

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[165] Ibid., 136-7.

[166] Ibid., 147; Ibn ʿAsākir, 212; Sayf b. ʿUmār, *Kitāb al-riddah wa'l-futūḥ*, 193.

[167] Q 3:21. Q 3:103 is also found commonly in the narrative of ʿUthmān and emphasizes how one of the signs of God was that He unified the community and made them brothers.

[168] The phrase he uses for "authority among you" is from Q 4:59 which reads, "O you who believe, obey God and the Prophet and those in authority among you; and if you are at variance over something, refer it to God and the Messenger, if you believe in God and the Last Day. This is good for you and the best of settlements." The argument is that disagreements with the government should be left in the hands of God rather than taking them into your own hands or resorting to force. This verse is freely called upon in a variety of narratives to justify the status quo or to support Muʿtazalite views of withholding judgment.

Ibn Abī Bakr states the views of the *Rawāfiḍ* and then refutes them.[173] He claims the *Rawāfiḍ* believe that ʿAlī poisoned Abū Bakr, plotted secretly against ʿUmar, and instigated the revolt against ʿUthmān. His point is that those groups who support ʿAlī and associate him with the early divisions within the community or claim that he was involved in the revolt against ʿUthmān are really heretical groups and not Muslims at all. In fact, any of the common criticisms held against ʿUthmān as a reason for the siege, according to Ibn Abī Bakr, are among the heresies of the

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[169] Ibid., 151-175. He includes pages of variations on the key points that ʿUthmān married Muḥammad's daughters, supplied Muḥammad's army, commanded Muḥammad's respect, bought the well of Rūmah, and enlarged the mosque of Medina.
[170] Ibid., 175.
[171] Ibid., 171-3. This section of accounts is based on Ibn Ḥanbal.
[172] It is at this point that he includes several *ḥadīth* that address the consequences of killing ʿUthmān – the division of the community, bloodshed, the unsheathed sword of God unleashed upon the community, including two variations of the death of 70,000 and 35,000 respectively for killing a prophet and a caliph. Ibid., 177.
[173] Ibn Abī Bakr addresses the *Rawāfiḍ* and then the *Khawārij* and the *Ziyadah* (Extremists). Certainly these are not genuine Shīʿite views, but those held against them in the Sunnī heresy literature.

Rawāfiḍ. His summary of these accusations and subsequent refutation of them are similar to those found in Muḥibb al-Dīn.[174] Like Muḥibb al-Dīn, he gives different interpretations or evidence whenever possible. And when not, he asserts, based on *ḥadīth*, that if ʿUthmān was a Companion and member of Paradise he simply could not have done the things of which he was accused.[175] However, unlike Muḥibb al-Dīn, Ibn Abī Bakr rejects the authenticity of the *ḥadīth* in which Muḥammad predicted the *fitnah*. Instead he recalls *ḥadīth* that affirm there would be peace and unity among the Companions and that they were all promised Paradise. Ibn Abī Bakr blames the revolt on the Sabāʾiyyah who desired the *fitnah* and caused the divisions within the community. In contrast, Ibn Abī Bakr portrays the Companions striving to defend ʿUthmān and willing to sacrifice themselves on his behalf.

In response to the charge that ʿUthmān did not forbid his supporters to fight on his behalf and urged them to fight unjustly, Ibn Abī Bakr offers four rebuttals from al-Jāḥiẓ based on *ḥadīth*, logic, and a desire to preserve the unity of the community. The first is that Muḥammad had told ʿUthmān he would be unjustly killed and so ʿUthmān resolved to suffer patiently as he had promised. Second, ʿUthmān knew the Companions were a small number in comparison to those who wanted to kill him, so if he permitted them to fight they would be annihilated on account of him and he did not want to be responsible for their blood. Third, he did not think it would develop into a full-blown *fitnah* and he did not think he would be killed and so he did not want to be the one to bring the sword into the community of Believers and violate the holy city.[176] Fourth, ʿUthmān thought God would give them the victory and that this could be accomplished without having to shed the blood of fellow Muslims. In the end al-Jāḥiẓ acknowledges, however, that only God knows all.[177]

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[174] The accusations are introduced with "verily it is said" without any *isnād*.

[175] Such as the accusation that he wrote the letter to his Egyptian governor.

Ibn Abī Bakr begins chapter twelve: "What happened to those who went out against ʿUthmān and those who defended him," with a series of accounts of how those who killed ʿUthmān or were involved in the siege ultimately perished.[178] He gathers together all manner of accounts to make a point of God's judgment on those who revolted.[179] These accounts reaffirm the unity of the community and the support of the Companions for ʿUthmān by illustrating how those who participated in the revolt were killed in the battles that followed or in individual acts of retaliation. Whereas those who killed ʿUthmān died violently by the will of God, ʿUthmān is repeatedly described as being in Paradise with the Prophet and the first two caliphs. Ibn Abī Bakr includes accounts of people having visions or dreams in which they see ʿUthmān with Muḥammad and the first two caliphs and he is described as bearing the blood of martyrdom.[180] The emphasis on ʿUthmān's status as a martyr is further developed when Ibn Abī Bakr compares the murder of ʿUthmān, ʿUmar, ʿAlī, and al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī.

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[176] This recalls the earlier accounts based on Ibn ʿUmar's advice to not step down, but rather than a bad precedent or imitation of infidels, ʿUthmān is now concerned with the sanctity of Medina.
[177] The final section of this chapter is what the Companions did when they learned that ʿUthmān had been besieged and murdered in which Ibn Abī Bakr relies primarily on accounts by Sayf b. ʿUmar.
[178] Ibid., 219-232.
[179] That is, they are in hell. Ibid., 218.
[180] One account records Muḥammad saying: "Who loves them [the Companions] loves me and I love them and who hates them, hates me and I hate them and who harms them has harmed me and who has harmed me has harmed God." Ibid., 232. The same account continues with the narrator pointing out that ʿUthmān was martyred and is now in Paradise. This is followed by another account that states ʿUthmān is one of the ten promised Paradise and that the "hypocrites" (the title in the prophetic *hadīth* for those who would forcefully try to remove ʿUthmān's robe of authority) are in hell.

The sub-heading is "Why the attack and murder of ʿUthmān was more significant than the attack and murder of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb and he is more virtuous and why the calamity of al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī is more terrible than the calamity of ʿAlī and he is better than him."[181] In the comparison between ʿUmar and ʿUthmān the narrator points out that ʿUthmān was killed in front of the people after a siege that lasted more than forty days. "And more than that, those who killed him were Muslims who through passion, hatred, and envy were carried away to committing the offense of a forbidden act in the holy city during the holy month."[182] In contrast, ʿUmar was assassinated by one man who was an unbeliever. The account continues by drawing a similar comparison between al-Ḥusayn and ʿAlī. Whereas ʿAlī was assassinated by one man, a Khārijite, who had "departed from his religion," al-Ḥusayn was killed in a "public" battle along with his supporters and members of his family and all this was done by a group claiming to be Muslims. Ibn Abī Bakr then provides gruesome and dramatic details on the battle of Karbala. By including this account, Ibn Abī Bakr is essentially reiterating what he was doing throughout the narrative of the revolt – namely creating a Sunnī martyr narrative to rival al-Ḥusayn's at Karbala.[183]

The comparison between al-Ḥusayn and ʿUthmān and the references to the sanctity of Medina makes me wonder whether Ibn Abī Bakr was addressing the Banū

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[181] Ibid., 239. Ibn Bakr offers no *isnād*, although the preceding account is attributed to Aḥmad b. Hanbal and so this one may be as well

[182] Ibid. This emphasis on Medina and the pilgrimage may reflect the renewed attention it started to receive under Nūr al-Dīn, Saladin, the ʿAbbāsid caliphs, and the Mamlūks.

[183] This is followed by a section in which the author again praises ʿUthmān's virtues vis-à-vis the other *Rāshidūn* Caliphs. He includes several *ḥadīths* in which ʿUthmān is described providing mediation (*shafāʿah*) for those entering Paradise. Ibid., 242.

Ḥusayn who controlled the city. Was he trying to distinguish between recognition of al-Ḥusayn's martyrdom and the excessive Shīʿite veneration of ʿAlī and al-Ḥusayn? Such a possibility or outlook may be supported further by Ibn Abī Bakr's subsequent attack on the excesses of the *Rawāfiḍ*.[184] He begins by stating God loves those who love Muḥammad's Companions *and* the people of his house.[185] The account acknowledges the division between the members of Muḥammad's family and the Companions, but insists they did not want to fight each other.[186] In contrast, the *Rawāfiḍ* have developed out of the first group and created their own "*madhhab*" in which they curse the Companions.[187] Because they reject and discredit "the righteous forefathers," the account continues, their marriages and divorces are illegitimate. Not only are they outside the law, they are doomed to the fire because they reject the Companions and elevate ʿAlī to an improper degree.[188] Ibn Abī Bakr argues for the unity of Muḥammad's community, family and Companions, past and present. His final step in this process is to refute the more excessive, or clearly heretical from a Sunnī perspective, beliefs of the *Rawāfiḍ*.

Ibn Abī Bakr relies primarily on al-Jāḥiẓ to refute the Shīʿites' misplaced reverence for ʿAlī and his descendents. Al-Jāḥiẓ begins with a report in which ʿAlī said that Muḥammad told him that he (ʿAlī) would be like Jesus, son of Mary, and just as the disciples loved Jesus and gave him a status he did not possess, so men would exaggerate ʿAlī's role as well. ʿAlī then states that this news was a heavy burden to him.[189] One of the ways the *Rawāfiḍ* gave ʿAlī a status he did not possess was by claiming all prophets are born in secret and ʿAlī was born in secret. They also claim the imāms have secret knowledge, but al-Jāḥiẓ points out that claiming secret knowledge and knowing things before hand is similar to the teachings of ʿAbdallah b. Sabāʾ. He goes on to attack their belief in the transmigration of souls and that the spirit of Prophethood in Muḥammad was passed down through ʿAlī's family. Such beliefs, as well as different ritual practices, he argues, make the *Rawāfiḍ* unbelievers.

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[184] Zāyid does not include the remainder of the manuscript (pages 227-248) in his edited edition of the *Tamhīd*.
[185] Ibn Abī Bakr, "Tamhīd" (Dār al-Kutub), 228.
[186] That is: ʿAlī, Fatimah, al-Ḥusayn and al-Ḥasan against ʿĀʾishah, Muʿāwiyah, al-Zubayr and Ṭalḥah. There is no *isnād* for this account. In fact, Ibn Abī Bakr is much more inconsistent in his use of *isnāds* in the latter portions of his narrative.
[187] Ibid.
[188] These last two criticisms are also reminiscent of Medina in the late thirteenth century. Apparently when the Shīʿites had still controlled the city, Sunnīs would have to get their permission and pay them a fee before they could get married. Marmon, *Eunuchs*, 56-7. She also notes how references to fire dominate the discourse after the river of molten lava almost destroyed the city, the Tomb of the Prophet was destroyed by fire, and the Mongols raized Baghdad. Ibid., 50.

Ibn Abī Bakr concludes his biography of ʿUthmān with two lengthy dialogues between al-Jāḥiẓ and a *Rafiḍī* antagonist which highlight the inconsistencies of the *Rawāfiḍ* views. For example, the *Rafiḍī* claimed, "The imāms who were born to ʿAlī were born circumcised, just like the prophets."[190] When al-Jāḥiẓ responded with sarcastic surprise, the *Rafiḍī* said there is another "seal of prophethood" that has been passed down through ʿAlī's line and that is a special mark on their back. Again al-Jāḥiẓ responded with "increased amazement" and forced the man to admit that this mark is sometimes "veiled" by God among ʿAlī's descendents. Al-Jāḥiẓ laughed at the weakness of his argument and moved on to the question of the inculcation of the imām; the poor *Rafiḍī* and his views emerge looking foolish and full of contradictions. In the second dialogue the *Rafiḍī* stated God never sent just one messenger to a community. He then listed Abraham and Ishmael, Isaac and Jacob, Moses and Aaron, Lot and Job, David and Solomon, Zechariah and Daniel, Jesus and John, Muḥammad and ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib. Al-Jāḥiẓ's only response to this was that to claim God sent ʿAlī with Muḥammad was unbelief in God.[191]

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[189] Ibid., 239-40.
[190] Ibid., 244.

After this Ibn Abī Bakr concludes with a brief statement in which the angel Gabriel implored God for aid in the victory against those who claim ʿAlī was sent with Muḥammad. Gabriel said: "Almighty God attack them and their excesses; God protect us from unbelief. God knows all." The published edition of the *Tamhīd* does not include the material after the comparison between the martyrdom of Ḥusayn and ʿUthmān through to this cry from Gabriel. Zāyid rejoins the manuscript for the closing benediction:

> End of the book and praise God, Lord of heaven and earth, and all creation, and peace on His good creation, Muḥammad, his family, his Companions, his wives, his descendents, and his followers in peaceful submission for ever and ever. The humble servant of God, Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Abī Bakr, completed his compiling and composing -- God forgive him, his children, and the community of believers -- on Tuesday, the fifteenth of Dhī al-Qʿadah, 699 (1299).[192]

This conservative conclusion belies the dramatic exhortation of the angel Gabriel and the originality of the work as a whole. Although more information about the author should provide additional context, there is some mystery about the author and exactly what context he was responding to.

MUḤAMMAD B. YAḤYĀ B. ABĪ BAKR

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[191] Ibid., 246.

[192] Ibid., 248; Ibn Abī Bark, *Tamhīd*, ed. Zāyid, 234.

The manuscript has been attributed to the Andalusian scholar and judge Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr b. Sa'd al-Ashʿarī al-Mālikī, known as (*yuʿraf bi*) Ibn Bakr (674-741/1270-1340). Information on Ibn (Abī) Bakr comes from Lisān al-Dīn Ibn al-Khaṭīb's (d. 776/1375) history of Granada, *Al-Iḥāṭa fī akhbār gharnāṭah*.[193] Lisān al-Dīn tells us Ibn Bakr was of Andalusian origin, was among the leaders of the *ʿulamāʾ* there, and was known for his administration of justice and readings in *ḥadīth*, dates, and lineage. He traveled throughout Syria, the Hijaz, and Egypt and then returned to al-Andalus. He became the *shaykh* of his hometown of Muʿaliqah (Málaga) and then its *qāḍī* before being invested with the office of preacher and judge in Granada in 737/1337.[194] Ibn Bakr died a martyr, along side Lisān al-Dīn's father, in the battle of Salado or Tarifa in 741/1340, the "greatest single reverse suffered by the Muslim cause in Spain until the final loss of Granada in 1492."[195]

Ibn Abī Bakr appears in several other biographical dictionaries, which all draw on the single report in the *Iḥaṭa,* but do not mention the "Abī" in his name, apparently following Lisan al-Dīn's remark that he was known as Ibn Bakr.[196] What is somewhat problematic, however, is that none of the biographical dictionaries, including the *Iḥaṭa*, mention that Ibn Bakr wrote *Tamhīd wa'l-bayān*. Nor does recent scholarship help to address this surprising lapse.[197] Despite Ibn Bakr's lengthy and unusual treatise, position as chief *qāḍī*, colorful career, and martyrdom, he has remained relatively unknown to scholars. Zāyid summarizes the information available from the biographical dictionaries, but offers no analysis whatsoever of the text or its author.[198] Maribel Calero Secall from the University of Málaga mentions him in her recent article "Rulers and Qāḍīs: Their Relationship during the Naṣrid Kingdom."[199] She focuses on his character as it is portrayed in the biographical material and what this reveals about the authority of the *qāḍī* vis-à-vis the sulṭān. She says nothing, however, about his career path before 700/1300 or the *Tamhīd* manuscript, no doubt because it is not mentioned in the biographical literature.[200]

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[193] Lisān al-Dīn b. al-Khaṭīb, *Al-Iḥaṭa fī akhbār gharnāṭah*, vol. 2 (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khanjī, 1973), 176-180. Virtually all subsequent biographical entries are a summary of the material found in the *Ihata*.

[194] Ibid. Al-Nabāhī (= al-Bunnāhi) adds that it was due to problems in Malaga that Ibn Bakr left his post there and moved to Granada. Abū al-Ḥassan al-Nabāhī al-Mālikī al-Andalusī, *Kitāb al-Marqabah al-ʿaliyya fī-man yastaḥiqqu al-qaḍāʾ wa'l-futyā*, ed. Miriam Qāsim Ṭawīl (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1995), 178.

[195] L.P. Harvey, *Islamic Spain 1250-1500* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 190. According to Lisān al-Dīn, Ibn Bakr's horse rolled over on him during the battle, but Ibn Bakr got up unhurt. He was encouraged to run from the battle since it was clear that the Muslims were going to lose, but Ibn Bakr quoted a Qur'anic verse on the glories of martyrdom. He returned to the battle and died a martyr.

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[196] al-Nabāhī, *al-Marqabah*; Abū al-ʿAbbās al-Tanbaktī, *Kitāb al-dībāj al-maḍhab*; al-Suyūṭī, *Baghiyat al-wʿāt*; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *al-Durar al-kāminah*, ed. Al-Shaykh ʿAbd al-Wārith Muḥammad ʿAlī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah), vol. 4: 175-6; Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Maqqarī, *Nafḥ al-ṭīb*, ed. Yūsuf al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Bagāʿī (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1986). Al-Maqqarī does add that Lisān al-Dīn himself studied with Ibn Bakr when he was the qādī in Granada. And the editor of *Nafḥ al-ṭīb* is the only one to comment on the difference in the names. He simply says that although his name was "Ibn Abī Bakr" the "Abū" was dropped and he was known as "Ibn Bakr." Vol. 7:378. Among indexes that refer to the *Ṭamhīd,* Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī, *Al-Aʿlām qāmūs turājim al-ashhar al-rijāl wa'l-nisā' min al-ʿarab wa'l-mustʿarabīn wa'l-mustashraqīn* vol. 7 (Beirut: Dār lil-ʿIlm lil-Malāīn), 138, and Ismaʿīl Pāshā al-Baghdādī, *hadiyyat al-ʿārlfīn ismā' al-mu'allifīn ithār al-muṣannifīn* vol. 2 (Istanbul, 1955), 150 do not mention the "Abī" in his name and draw their information primarily from Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī. Brockelmann, *GAS* vol. II, 260; vol. II sup., 371 does include the "Abī," as does the index for the Dār al-Kutub itself. *Fihrist al-kutub al-ʿarabiyyah al-maḥfūẓa bi-l-kutub jānah al-khidīwīyah al-maṣrīyah*, vol. 5 (Cairo, 1308 A.H.), 37.

[197] Only *Shajarat al-nūr fī ṭabaqāt al-mālikiyyah* by Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Makhlūf mentions it, and then in the entry on ʿUthmān rather than the entry for Ibn Bakr. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad Makhlūf, *Shajarat al-nūr fī ṭabaqāt al-mālikiyah* vol. 1 (Cairo: al-miṭubʿat al-salifiyah wa-maktibatuhā, 1931), 68. He notes that *Tamhīd wa'l-bayān* by Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā al-Ashʿarī, known as Ibn Bakr, and Muḥibb al-Dīn's Al-*Riyāḍ al-naḍirah* give all the possible excuses for ʿUthmān.

[198] His edition of the *Tamhīd* is used by the editors of *Kitāb al-riddah*, *Taʿrīkh madīnat Dimashq*, and *Ta'rīkh al-madīnah al-munawwarah* (by Ibn Shabbah) and perhaps others. They use the *Tamhīd* as a primary source for cross-checking accounts by Sayf b. ʿUmar. Wilferd Madelung is the only western scholar I am aware of who refers to Zāyid's edition of the *Tamhīd*. Madelung, *The Succession.*

[199] M. Isabel Calero Secall. "Rulers and Qāḍīs: Their Relationship during the Naṣrid Kingdom," *Islamic Law and Society* 7:2 (June 2000), 235-255. She draws most of her material from al-Nabāhāī,'s *Al-Marqabah,* although most of it is in Lisān al-Dīn's *Al-Iḥaṭa* as well.

The biographical entries on Ibn Bakr do show him conducting a *riḥlah* to the east for learning, in which case it is possible that this treatise was written while abroad and thus was not known in al-Andalus.[201] But would a young scholar leave such a work behind? That he wrote it while traveling might make sense since he would have been relatively young, twenty-nine. A monograph survey of the literature may also reflect the work of a young scholar.[202] Moreover, it is possible that coming from al-Andalus, Ibn (Abī) Bakr was struck by the Sunnī-Shīʿite tensions he saw in the Hijaz, and under the Mamlūks in Syria and Egypt as well.[203] This is not to say that al-Andalus was free from sectarian tension, as contemporary scholars increasingly are showing.[204] Most notable among these is the work by Maribel Fierro. In her opinion, a text such as the *Tamhīd* would have been completely consistent with Naṣrid rule in Muslim Spain (629-897/1232-1492) and their efforts at Sunnification after taking over power from the Almohads (567-629/1171-1232).[205] In this light such a treatise might have helped launch Ibn (Abī) Bakr's career; however, that would make its absence from the biographical literature all the more surprising.

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[200] She expressed doubts to me about the accuracy of the appellation if none of the biographical dictionaries mention it.

[201] Unfortunately al-Maqrīzī and al-Ṣafadī do not have an entry for Muḥammad b. Yaḥyā b. (Abī) Bakr. Al-Maqrīzī, *Kitāb al-muqaffā al-kabīr*, ed. Muḥammaed Yaʿlāwī (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 1991) and al-Ṣafadī, *Kitāb al-wāfī wa'l-wafayāt*, eds. Muḥammad b. Maḥmūd and Ibrāhīm b. Sulaimān (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH, 1970).

[202] The list of his teachers provided in the biographical dictionaries mentions only a couple of his teachers from Africa, Egypt, and the Hijaz by name and I was unable to find references to them in order to pinpoint more accurately the dates of his *riḥlah*.

[203] That the work was written in the east may also be deduced from the fact that the only copy is in Cairo and that while many texts made it west, far fewer made it east.

[204] See following chapter.

[205] This is based on a conversation I had with her at the CSIC in Madrid in July 2001.

It may not be necessary, however, to draw firm distinctions between the contextual climate in al-Andalus and the Hijaz. To be sure al-Andalus experienced its own series of dynasties that shaped how early Islamic history was perceived and portrayed, producing a unique discourse on the caliphate of ʿUthmān. At the same time, however, historical and literary developments in al-Andalus often paralleled the Islamic East in striking ways. For example, the Almohads sought to legitimize their rule by claiming descent from Muḥammad and thus adopted some Shīʿite language in their veneration of Muḥammad's house, in particular the martyrdom of Ḥusayn.[206] Their successors, the Naṣrids, therefore, sought to legitimize themselves by rejecting and criticizing anything remotely Shīʿite and reaffirming the conservative stance of Mālikī Islam. Such a shift is similar to and contemporaneous with the shift in the east from rapproachment between Sunnīs and Shīʿites in the first half of the thirteenth century – as seen in Ibn al-Athīr, Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī, and Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd -- to the Sunnī reaction in the second half of the century. More specifically, in the case of Ibn Abī Bakr, one wonders about the Sunnī reaction in al-Andalus to dramatic poetry about al-Ḥusayn from the Almohad period and in Medina to the rule of the Banū Ḥusayn.

In addition to parallels, there are points of intersection between East and West. Gary Leiser has written on the importance of Andalusian scholars and the establishment of schools in Egypt as a part of re-Sunnification after the fall of the Fāṭimids.[207] Andalusian scholars traveled east for learning and pilgrimage and Egypt and the Hijaz were the primary objectives of both. Moreover, as mentioned above, the sanctuaries of Medina and Mecca had become the object of renewed reverence in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and this seems to have extended to al-Andalus. For example, the incident of the Shīʿite mob of Medina throwing stones at the Sunnī preacher, Sirāj al-Dīn, was witnessed by Badr al-Dīn b. Farḥūn. Badr al-Dīn's father, Muḥammad b. Farḥūn was of Andalusian origin and "left his home in North Africa to take up residence in Madina in obedience to what he interpreted as a divine command. He served as a deputy (*nāʾib*) to the beleaguered Sirāj al-Dīn and founded the leading Mālikī family in Madina, the illustrious Banū Farḥūn."[208] As Andalusians bolstered Sunnī Islam in Egypt under the Ayyūbids, did they do the same in the Hijaz under the Mamlūks? By focusing on developments within the texts themselves, I have only been able to scratch the surface of such connections. But the fact that they emerge points to the insights that can be gained from future research that combines narrative analyses with regional and period studies.

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[206] Maribel Fierro, "Derecho, Teología y Heterodoxia," in *El Retroceso Territorial de al-Andalus: Almorávides y Almohades Siglos XI al XIII*, ed. M.J. Viguera (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, S.A., 1997): 470-1.

Conclusion

The narratives of ʿUthmān in the seventh/thirteenth century reflect a shift away from the *ḥadīth*-based biographies of the preceding centuries and a re-engagement with the early historical sources; however, this was done to very different effect in the first and second half of the century. Ibn al-Athīr reintroduces al-Ṭabarī's narrative of ʿUthmān with many of the controversial aspects that had been minimized or ignored by Sunnī writers during the preceding centuries in their polemics against the Shīʿites. Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī and Ibn Abī'l-Ḥadīd use an even greater range of sources to produce even more critical narratives of ʿUthmān. These works show a degree of detachment from religious tensions and resignation to political realities. In contrast, the treatises of the second half of the century reflect the new religio-political alignments caused by the Mongol invasions, fall of Baghdad, collapse of the ʿAbbāsid Caliphate, and rise of the Mamlūks of Egypt. In the shadow of these crises, engagement with early Islamic history and sources took on new import. The second half of the century is characterized by aggressive anti-Shīʿism as scapegoats were sought and found and the Mamlūks and the *ʿulamāʾ* worked to consolidate their position in the new world order.

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[207] Gary Leiser, "Muslims from al-Andalus in the Madrasas of Late Fāṭimid and Aiyūbid Egypt," *Al-Qantara* 20:1 (1999):137-159.
[208] Marmon, *Eunuchs*, 138-9, fn. 161.

Islamic Spain was at one point the "new world" for medieval Muslims. Its unique history, but close relations with the rest of the Islamic world, produced a distinct but parallel historical discourse. The Andalusian narratives of ʿUthmān reflect both these aspects. The need for a series of Andalusian regimes to legitimate themselves vis-à-vis their predecessors as well as their rivals in the Islamic world, produced a unique perspective on early Islamic history. The Andalusian narratives of ʿUthmān not only help to contextualize Ibn Abī Bakr's treatise, they also enable us to see how the themes debated thus far in the narratives of ʿUthmān are refracted through the distinct history and historiography of al-Andalus. Points of difference further highlight the ways in which the past was continually re-interpreted in response to the needs of the present. Points of similarity reflect the continuity of historical memory and its role in defining communal identity and boundaries.

> We require a history that will educate us to discontinuity more than ever before; for discontinuity, disruption, and chaos is our lot. If, as Nietzsche said, 'We have art in order not to die of the truth,' we also have truth in order to escape the seduction of a world which is nothing but the creation of our longings . . . Only a chaste historical consciousness can truly challenge the world anew every second, for only history mediates between what is and what men think it ought to be with truly humanizing effect.[1]

CHAPTER FOUR -- REFRACTION: ʿUTHMĀN in AL-ANDALUS

Introduction

Ibn Abī Bakr and *Al-Tamhīd wa'l-bayān fī maqtal al-shahīd ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān* present an opportunity to see the issues discussed so far in relation to the narrative of ʿUthmān refracted through a unique geographical, historical, and historiographical prism – al-Andalus. Islamic Spain was at the same time closely connected to and distinct from the rest of the Islamic world. Scholars traveled freely from west to east and back again. At the same time al-Andalus was a frontier zone cut off by great distance from the eastern centers of the Islamic world and in close and constant contact with its Christian neighbors to the north and the variety of Islamic sects that flourished in North Africa. Moreover, al-Andalus had a distinct history characterized by the rise and fall of local regimes. For the most part legitimacy for these regimes was sought internally, through the unique history and destiny of al-Andalus. This led to a surprising degree of indifference towards early Islamic history. But some regimes also made larger ideological claims in order to legitimize themselves vis-à-vis their immediate predecessors or rival Islamic governments and thus would appeal to early Islamic history as a support for such claims. The result was a unique discourse, engaged in, but distinct from, the debates that occupied the Islamic heartlands.

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[1] White, *Tropics of Discourse*, 50.

Although al-Andalus experienced its own unique sequence of dynastics, religious, political, and cultural trends often paralleled developments in the east. For example, the Umayyad rulers of Spain (317-422/929-1031), like the ʿAbbāsids, had to respond to the caliphal claims of the Shīʿiite Fāṭimids of North Africa. Internal divisions among the Umayyads' successors resulted in the fall of Toledo to the Christians in 478/1085, foreshadowing the consequences of similar divisions in Syria-Palestine and the fall of Jerusalem to the Crusaders in 492/1099. The response in both regions was also a call for unity, spiritual renewal, and jihād against the Christians. Both regions also experienced a shift in Shīʿite-Sunnī understanding at the end of the sixth/twelfth century and first half of the seventh/thirteenth century. Finally, it seems likely that the Christian advances in the west in the thirteenth century, in which the glories of al-Andalus were reduced to an enclave around Granada, resonated with the Mongol advances in the east and the fall of Baghdad, to encourage in the latter half of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries a re-invigorated debate over some of the founding religio-political principles in Islam.

How did the relations between sulṭāns and caliphs, *ʿulamāʾ* and rulers, Shīʿites and Sunnīs develop in al-Andalus? For the most part al-Andalus considered itself distinct from the rest of the Islamic world and therefore independent of the ʿAbbāsid Caliphate. Thus there is not the same discussion of the appropriate relationship between caliphs and sulṭāns. Andalusian rulers sometimes claimed the title caliph and sometimes ruled as amīrs of regions or cities. The *ʿulamāʾ* for the most part appear to have cooperated with these various shifts in government. When writing under a caliphal regime, they proclaimed the rights of the caliph over the Fāṭimids or ʿAbbāsids, and when writing for an amīr, they proclaimed his rights over rival amīrs. It is noteworthy that a ruler's legitimacy was based most often on fighting schism and heresy within Islam rather than waging jihād against the Christians. And this despite the fact that al-Andalus is generally regarded as a pillar of strict Mālikī Islam, free from heresy or sectarian rivalry. Al-Andalus actually experienced both, admittedly to a much smaller degree than in the east and rarely developing into any type of mass mobilization. This was partly due to the fact that the rulers and the Mālikī *ʿulamāʾ* were very aware of the threat to their own authority and so worked together to eradicate individuals or groups fomenting religious or political dissent.

The close relationship between the *ʿulamāʾ* and the rulers can be seen in the *ʿulamāʾ*'s response to shifts in religio-political claims and consequent shifts in Sunnī-Shīʿite relations. These shifts can be traced in the Andalusian scholarly discourse on early Islamic history. As already mentioned, however, religio-political legitimacy was primarily found within Andalusian politics and history and so there are surprisingly few sources on the early Islamic period. Moreover, the sources that do exist, show a remarkable degree of detachment from the religio-political issues that divided the rest of the Islamic world. That is to say, they brought a uniquely Andalusian perspective to those tensions, downplaying familiar characters and themes only to highlight different ones. How writers used and altered familiar sources on the caliphate of ʿUthmān in order to meet their contemporary needs is a further example of the symbiotic relationship between historical narrative and imagination, memory and meaning.

THE EARLY UMAYYADS (133-317/750-929)

When Muslim armies entered the Iberian Peninsula in 99/711 no one could have foreseen the struggles and glories that would both link and distinguish al-Andalus from the rest of the Islamic world. At that time the integrity and unity of the Umayyad Caliphate in Damascus remained relatively intact. After the ʿAbbāsids supplanted the Umayyads in a revolution in 133/750, one Umayyad family member, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān (I) ibn Muʿāwiyah, fled for his life and made his way to al-Andalus. He established an Umayyad dynasty there in 138/756, but his descendents ruled merely as amīrs, not recognizing the authority of the ʿAbbāsids while at the same time not making any caliphal claims themselves. In the third/ninth century Mālikī Islam became clearly pre-eminent.[2] Andalusian scholars followed Mālik b. Anas' legal reasoning (*ra'y*) and were known as *ahl/aṣḥāb al-ra'y* who refused to have anything to do with *ḥadīth*.[3] One scholar who was an ardent proponent of Mālikī Islam, but also introduced *ḥadīth* to the Peninsula was ʿAbd al-Mālik Ibn Ḥabīb (180-238/796-853).[4] He also wrote one of the oldest extant Islamic universal histories, *Kitāb al-ta'rīkh*.[5]

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[2] There are a variety of reasons for this, but the one most commonly held to, is that Mālikism was dominant in the Hijaz and Egypt where most Andalusians went to study or for the hajj, while few made it as far as Iraq, where the other legal schools held precedence. Maria Isabel Fierro, "Heresy in al-Andalus," in *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, ed. Salma Khadra Jayyusi (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1992), 896.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibn Ḥabīb was a scholar of great renown who traveled east to further his studies, spending time in Jerusalem, Egypt, and the Hijaz, where he became familiar with the doctrine of Mālik b. Anas. Upon

Ibn Ḥabīb

Ibn Ḥabīb's history mingles biblical history with that of Muḥammad, the first four caliphs, and the Umayyad dynasty, followed by the history of the Umayyad rulers of al-Andalus. He relies on the Qur'ān, *ḥadīth*, historical traditions and apocalyptic traditions. In fact his history is full of fantastical material that has perplexed scholars and caused them to dismiss his history.[6] But Janina Safran sees his writings as reflecting both the outlook of al-Andalus in the ninth century as well as the unique perspective of Ibn Ḥabīb. According to Safran the myths and legends that fill early Andalusian historiography reflect the way al-Andalus itself was seen as a strange and dangerous place.[7] Al-Andalus' location on the borders of the Islamic world is also evidenced in the fact that Ibn Ḥabīb was the first Andalusian scholar to use *ḥadīth*, but did so in an uncritical way.[8] Finally, Ibn Ḥabīb's history demonstrates his own "pietistic concern to recount the history of Islam and to warn believers of the

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his return to al-Andalus, Ibn Ḥabīb was appointed a *faqīh* (jurist) by the Amīr ʿAbd al-Raḥmān II and in this role advised the *qāḍī* (judge) of Cordoba and occasionally the amīr.

[5] ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Ḥabīb, *Kitāb al-ta'rīkh*, ed. Jorge Aguadé (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas. Instituto de cooperación con el Mundo Arabe, 1991).

[6] For example, A. Huici-Miranda attributes the acceptance of legends as evidence that the Andalusians were "ignorant rustics" at that time in comparison with their counterparts in the East. "Ibn Ḥabīb," *EI²*. But Janina Safran notes that the great scholar of Islamic Spain, R. Dozy, "wondered at Ibn Ḥabīb's recounting of fables that surely must have clashed with the collective knowledge of his countrymen, if not with his own reason." Safran, *The Second Umayyad Caliphate: The Articulation of Caliphal Legitimacy in al-Andalus* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 149.

[7] Safran, *The Second Umayyad Caliphate*, 141-150. She adds that in the tenth century histories written under the greater security of the Umayyad caliphate no longer have the same fanciful material. Fables remain, but they are much less pronounced and there is a more systematic use of *khabār*, *ḥadīth*, and *isnād*. Ibid., 117.

[8] As *ḥadīth* studies became more established in al-Andalus, Ibn Ḥabīb's *ḥadīth* were criticized and rejected by later *ḥadīth* specialists. Fierro, "Heresy in al-Andalus," 897.

Day of Judgment."[9] But for Ibn Ḥabīb the history and destiny of the God's community are centered on al-Andalus.

Ibn Ḥabīb treats the early Islamic period as a brief introduction to Andalusian history. According to Safran, "Ibn Ḥabīb defined the portion of his 'universal' history devoted to the age of Islam by the history of the Umayyad dynasty, shifting his focus from east to west with the conquest of the peninsula and the foundation of Umayyad rule. This text binds the fate of Islam inextricably with the fate of the Umayyads and of al-Andalus."[10] Ibn Ḥabīb demonstrates no great concern to defend the Umayyads of Damascus against their ʿAlid rivals or ʿAbbāsid conquerors. Legitimacy and destiny was internal, based on what the Umayyads of Cordoba did and achieved. This relative indifference to early Islamic history in general, and the consequences of the first *fitnah* in particular, is evidenced in Ibn Ḥabīb's narrative of ʿUthmān.

Ibn Ḥabīb's narrative of ʿUthmān's caliphate is only four pages in length, in which he shows no concern for defending ʿUthmān or debating the causes or consequences of the *fitnah*.[11] He says very little about ʿUthmān's character or events that could be used in his defense. He includes al-Wāqidī's account that when ʿUthmān enlarged the mosque in Medina he had to tear down other buildings to do it and the people were angry with him and in fact "screamed" at him.[12] He in turn points out that if ʿUmar had done the same thing they would not have yelled at him. Ibn Ḥabīb also elaborates on how the mosque did indeed need to be widened. Ibn Ḥabīb does not use *ḥadīth* to defend ʿUthmān or his close relationship with the Prophet. Rather than *ḥadīths* that emphasize how ʿUthmān alone married two daughters of a prophet, Ibn Ḥabīb includes an account of ʿUthmān's marriage to Nāʾilah bt. al-Farāfisaḥ. He retells a somewhat salacious story of the great disparity in their ages, yet Nāʾilah's preference for ʿUthmān and how on their first night together he asked her to stand before him and remove her clothing one article at a time.[13] This account praises ʿUthmān as a man and a husband, but says nothing about ʿUthmān's virtue or relations with the Prophet.

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[9] Safran, *The Second Umayyad Caliphate*, 143. His concern with final judgment and the apocalypse may have encouraged him to include some of the less believable aspects of his history. Ibid., 147.

[10] Ibid., 143-4.

[11] The only source he mentions at the beginning of his entry on the caliphate of ʿUthmān is al-Wāqidī. His very lackadaisical use of *isnāds* was also typical of the early Andalusian period and was replaced by greater rigor as Andalusian scholarship became more established.

Ibn Ḥabīb does not develop the reasons for the revolt any more than he did ʿUthmān's virtues. He notes that when ʿUthmān removed ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ from the governorship in Egypt and replaced him with ʿAbdallāh b. Abī Sarḥ, ʿAmr became angry and this "was the beginning of the evil."[14] This is mentioned at the very beginning of the entry, right after mentioning the years of ʿUthmān's reign and who led the Pilgrimage caravans. This provides a key interpretive point coming at the beginning of the narrative, but it is all Ibn Ḥabīb says about the great controversy surrounding ʿUthmān's appointment of governors and nepotism. Beyond this the only other explanation he gives for why the people turned against ʿUthmān, and one that receives much more attention, is that ʿUthmān lost Muḥammad's ring that had been passed down from Abū Bakr to ʿUmar.[15] Ibn Ḥabīb points out that after it was lost, "from those days the people despised ʿUthmān."[16] The symbolic significance of the ring may have resonated with Ibn Ḥabib's interest in signs and wonders. The fact that writers from the later Umayyad period do not include this story may reflect more circumspect use of historical sources, although this is not likely since the account appears in many chronicles in the east. Its absence from later Umayyad narratives may also be due to a distaste for the implications of the event, tainting the caliphate and those who defended Uthmān's right to it, namely Muʿāwiyah and his descendents. But Ibn Ḥabīb himself shows little interest in defending the caliphate.

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[12] Ibn Ḥabīb, 111.

[13] Ibid. This account is also in Ibn ʿAsākir, but when combined with the many *ḥadīths* regarding ʿUthmān's marriages with Muḥammad's daughters the resulting image is that ʿUthmān was a good husband.

[14] Ibid.

In the siege Ibn Ḥabīb includes some familiar defenses for ʿUthmān, but nothing that defends the unity of the community or the office of the caliphate. First of all, Ibn Habīb simply says ʿUthmān was besieged forty-nine days by several hundred men from Egypt, Kufa, and Basra who came to kill him. ʿUthmān was patient, refused to fight, was fasting, and had bought the well for the Muslims. But Ibn Ḥabīb does not contrast ʿUthmān's virtue with the besiegers' violence. ʿUthmān also said he would gladly do as they desired and remove himself were it not for the words of the Messenger of God: "Verily God will clothe you with a shirt and when they want you to remove it, do not remove it."[17] ʿUthmān told his besiegers that after this affair he would be blessed and they would be cursed. In fact ʿUthmān asked God to “scatter their affairs, bring conflict into their discourse, and take revenge for me.”[18] Ibn Habīb concludes, “And it was just as he said.”[19] ʿUthmān’s appeal for vengeance is very different from other accounts in which he refused to be the first to divide the community or to shed the blood of fellow Muslims. In Ibn Ḥabīb’s narrative, ʿUthmān makes no appeals to the unity of the community or the loyalty owed the caliph.

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[15] This appears in al-Ṭabarī as well. See Donner's remarks on this in the Introduction.
[16] Ibid., 113. Ibn Ḥabīb makes no mention of the letter to the Egyptian governor; this event can neither condemn ʿUthmān nor explain the besiegers' behavior.
[17] Ibid., 12.

Ibn Ḥabīb says little about the murder itself, except, “*Khārijah* from Kufa and Egypt killed him, and Ḥumrān b. Sudān from Egypt was appointed to kill him and his caliphate lasted twelve years.”[20] By blaming the Khārijites and making no mention of the Companions or divisions among them, Ibn Ḥabīb may have been drastically censoring his narrative. But the overall tone and lack of defense for ʿUthmān makes it more likely that the debates which such details addressed were simply irrelevant at that time in al-Andalus. This shifted slightly when events in North Africa pulled the Andalusian Umayyads into the religio-political tensions facing the larger Islamic world.

THE SECOND UMAYYAD CALIPHATE (317-422/929-1031)

The Ismāʿīlī Fāṭimid movement emerged out of North Africa when in 297/910 a Shīʿite propagandist, ʿAbdallāh Abū Muḥammad, declared himself the commander of the faithful, took the title of *al-Mahdī* (the rightly guided one), had the *khuṭbah* said in his name, and built a new capital on the coast of modern day Tunisia. The

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[18] Ibid., 13.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid., 114.

Fāṭimid successes in North Africa encouraged some Berber tribes to appeal for help to the Umayyad amīr of Cordoba, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III. In his correspondence with North African chieftains, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III presented himself "as the defender of the true faith against deviance, of the religion of the Prophet against false prophecy, of the Sunna against heretical innovation, and of the Quʾran against corruption, while his correspondents addressed him in the same terms, describing their dedication to the fight against the traitor of the faith, the great impostor, and pledging the elimination of that faction of error (*al-ḍalāla*) and unbelief (*al-kufr*)."[21] In light of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's claim to defend Islam while the Fāṭimids threatened it, it is perhaps not surprising that in 317/929 ʿAbd al-Rahman III proclaimed himself caliph, giving himself the title al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh.

"The Andalusi Umayyad caliph articulated his legitimacy in terms of his prosecution of holy war but, more particularly, emphasized his aggressive defense of the faith and the community against deviance and factionalism."[22] Defending the legitimacy of the Umayyad Caliphate vis-à-vis the ʿAbbāsids and the Fāṭimids, led the Andalusian Umayyads to focus on the glories of the Umayyads of Damascus and then the Islamic conquests of Spain and God's special blessings upon them both.[23] Legitimacy still was found overwhelmingly in events related directly to al-Andalus, but the caliphal claims of the Umayyads required greater interaction with early

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[21] Safran, *The Second Umayyad Caliphate*, 26.

[22] Ibid., 25.

[23] Ibid., 115. David Wasserstein also argues that when ʿAbd al-Raḥman claimed the caliphal title, "he did so by claiming the right of inheritance from those earlier Umayyads in Damascus." Wasserstein, *The Caliphate in the West: An Islamic Institution in the Iberian Peninsula* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 155.

Islamic history and those events related to the caliphate generally and the rival claims of the ʿAbbāsids and Fāṭimids.

The larger ideological claims of the Umayyad Caliphs are at first difficult to determine. David Wasserstein, for example, notes the absence of any treatise specifically on the subject. He argues that because the Umayyads waited so long to claim caliphal titles, the caliphate was a pragmatic and political affair, without religious or theoretical support.[24] Maribel Fierro contests this, arguing there was a clear ideological shift from the Umayyad amīrate to the Umayyad caliphate, evidence for which can be found, for example, in legal pronouncements.[25]

In Maribel Fierro's article "Caliphal legitimacy and Expiation in al-Andalus," she analyzes a *fatwah* from Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā al-Laythī to the amīr ʿAbd al-Raḥmān II and one from Isḥāq b. Ibrāhīm to the Caliph al-Ḥakam II (r. 350-366/961-976). She notes that the jurists gave very different reasons for why they advised the rulers as they did.[26] Fierro suggests that the case of al-Ḥakam shows that he was legally accepted as caliph, and indeed may have wanted to assert this even more in a turbulent time.[27] In contrast, Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā was dealing with an amīr without clear legal status. Fierro concludes:

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[24] Wasserstein, *The Caliphate in the West*, 154.

[25] Maribel Fierro, "On Political Legitimacy in al-Andalus: a Review Article," *Der Islam* 73 (1996): 147.

[26] In both cases the ruler had sexual relations with a female slave during the Ramadan fast and in both cases was told by the respective jurist to fast (rather than feed the poor or manumit a slave, which are the other options). The reasons given in the book of innovations that records these cases, however, are very different. In the case of al-Ḥakam II, the jurist pointed out that as caliph he had no private funds, rather everything belonged to the Muslim community so he could not perform the other two options. In the case of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān II, Yaḥyā b. Yaḥyā said fasting was the harder task and so would be more likely to discourage him from committing the same sin again. M. Fierro, "Caliphal Legitimacy and Expiation in al-Andalus," in *Islamic Legal Interpretation: Muftis and their Fatwas*, ed. Muhammad Khalid Masud, Brinkley Messick, and David S. Powers (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996): 55-62.

> Although the absence of the caliphal title was insignificant in practice, in theory it meant that the Umayyads' religio-political legitimacy was dubious and better left unmentioned. This situation is reflected in the lack of any legal discussion in al-Andalus as to how the Umayyad Andalusian emir fits within the framework of Islamic political theory. From a scholar's point of view, the existence of such an emir – indeed, of any emir – was better than his absence, because tyranny is better than anarchy. But the emir's legal *status* was not clear.[28]

Fierro argues there was genuine awareness and concern over the ambiguity of the Umayyad amīrs. Moreover, when the Umayyad amīrs adopted the title of caliph this had theoretical implications that were also taken seriously. One of the reasons Wasserstein fails to notice this is, that he focuses on Umayyad claims vis-à-vis the ʿAbbāsids rather than the Fāṭimids.[29]

The rivalry between the Umayyads and the Fāṭimids is perhaps most clearly seen in their contest over symbols. Fierro points out the similarities in the titles adopted by the first Fāṭimid Caliphs and by the Umayyads. The first Fāṭimid Caliph (r. 297-322/909-934) took the title "al-Mahdī" and the second (r. 322-334/934-946) adopted "al-Qāʾim bi-ʿAmr Allāh." The third (r. 334-341/946-953) took the title, al-Manṣūr bi-Nāṣr Allāh. Compare these with the titles adopted by ʿAbd al-Rahḥmān III

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[27] During the reign of al-Ḥakam, Fāṭimid missionaries were making more aggressive moves in al-Andalus. Indeed Isḥāq b. Ibrāhīm condemned a Fāṭimid missionary, Abū'l-Khayr, to death without possibility of appeal. Farhat Dachraoui, "Tentative d'Infiltration Šīʿite en Espagne Musulmane sous le Règne d'al-Ḥakam II," *Al-Andalus* 23:1 (1958): 102; Fierro, "Heresy in al-Andalus," 901.

[28] Fierro, "Caliphal Legitimacy and Expiation," 62.

[29] Fierro, "Espacio sunní y espacio šīʿí," *El esplendor de los Omeyas Cordobeses: La civilización musulman de Europa Occidental. Expositión en Madīnat al-Zahrāʾ*, ed. Junta de Andalucía, Consejería de Cultura a través de la Fundacion el Legado Andalusí (Granada: fundación el Legado Andalusí, 2001), 173; Safran, *The Second Umayyad Caliphate*, 25.

(r. 300-350/912-961): al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh and al-Qāʾim bi-llāh or al-Qāʾim bi'l-Haqq[30] and his successor al-Ḥakim II, al-Mustanṣir bi-llāh.[31] Fierro also points out the no doubt intentional similarity between the establishment of the Fāṭimid mosque in Cairo, al-Azhar, and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III's creation of the governing city near Cordoba, "Madinat al-Zahrāʾ."[32] Not only the ideological rivalry, but the perceived tangible threat of the Fāṭimids was particularly acute during the reign of al-Ḥakam II (r. 350-366/961-976).

The Fāṭimids were consolidating their position in North Africa and turning their gaze towards al-Andalus. In 358/969 they conquered Egypt and established a new capital, Cairo, in 362/ 973. The Fāṭimids also strengthened their position in North Africa and sent missionary agents into al-Andalus. Fierro argues that Fāṭimid missionary activity in al-Andalus and the Umayyad response indicate a battle for religious and political legitimacy.[33] This missionary activity was perceived as both a religious and political threat. One of the Fāṭimid missionaries, Abū'l-Khayr, was accused of fomenting rebellion against al-Ḥakam II. He was also accused of denying the first three *Rāshidūn* Caliphs along with typical slanders like sexual deviancy. He was tried without right to defense and crucified.[34] The political and ideological threat posed by the Fāṭimids also strengthened relations between the Andalusian *ʿulamāʾ* and the Umayyad Caliphs.[35]

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[30] Safran argues that by adopting the same name as his rival, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III was also taking on the eschatological claims to be the one who will usher in the *qiyāma* or day of Resurrection. Safran, *The Second Umayyad Caliphate*, 27.
[31] Fierro, "Espacio," 174-5.
[32] Ibid., 175.
[33] Ibid., 172.
[34] Ibid; Dachraoui, "Tentative d'Infiltration Šīʿite," 102.

Janina Safran analyzes court ceremonial that illustrates on what terms the Umayyad Caliphs claimed and received the support of the *ʿulamāʾ*. The historian ʿIsā al-Rāzī's (d. 346/989) account of the court of al-Ḥakam II provides enough detail to allow "us to see how ceremony expressed al-Ḥakam II's legitimacy in broad terms: ceremonial occasions modeled the caliph's claim to be the source of order and stability, the champion of the faith and the glory of the Muslims, and the agent of its unity."[36] The oration given during a court ceremony by the *faqīh*, Mundhir b. Saʿīd al-Ballūṭī, illustrates ideological support for the Umayyads based on their ability to unify the Islamic community and save the people of al-Andalus from the evils of *fitnah*.[37] Safran summarizes and analyzes the ideological content of his speech as follows:

> He warned that whoever withdraws his obedience, sows division in the community, and deviates from the religion is "forfeiting this life and the hereafter. That way perdition lies."[38] More particularly, the speech suggested that the audience owed allegiance to the caliph for all they enjoyed and admonished them to hold fast to him, given the particular circumstances of al-Andalus, a peninsula surrounded by polytheists and heretics determined to inflame revolt, divide the community, dishonor their women, sap the message of the Prophet, and cause them to forsake the true religion.[39]

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[35] Jurists originally rejected as unlawful Abū'l-Khayr's condemnation without right to defense. However, al-Hakam's promise to make Mālikism the official *madhhab* of the state settled the matter and Isḥāq b. Ibrāhīm wrote a *fatwah* legalizing the treatment of Abū'l-Khayr. Dachraoui, "Tentative d'Infiltration Šīʿite," 102.

[36] Safran, *The Second Umayyad Caliphate*, 75.

[37] Ibid., 73. The oration was given on the occasion of the arrival of a Byzantine envoy to the Umayyad court. Apparently the delegates and the *faqīh* designated to give a speech were struck dumb by the splendor of the occasion so that Ballūṭī made the oration.

[38] Q 22:11.

[39] Safran, *The Second Umayyad Caliphate*, 73.

Ballūtī concluded his speech by reminding the audience that they owed obedience to the caliph and cited the Quʾranic verse: "Obey God and obey the Apostle and those in authority among you."[40] It is not surprising to find appeals to unity based on obedience to the caliph in Umayyad political discourse. But it is worth noting how this discourse affected historiography as well. It is only in narratives of ʿUthmān from the period of the Umayyad Caliphate that we find defenses for the rights of the caliph and the importance of the caliph for maintaining the unity of the community.

Narratives of ʿUthmān were affected by the Caliphate of Cordoba's claims to legitimacy based on linkages with the Umayyad Caliphate of Damascus. In Safran's analysis of the construction of the great Umayyad mosque in Cordoba, she focuses on their efforts to claim legitimacy as successors to the Umayyads of Damascus. She concludes, "The mosque's architectural and decorative references to Syrian Umayyad monuments identified Cordoba as an Umayyad city and capital."[41] This architectural program was a part of the Umayyads' propaganda war with the Fāṭimids.[42] But an emphasis on the first Umayyad caliphate brought the Andalusian Umayyads into conflict with the ʿAbbāsids as well. Safran traces the implications of this in the chronicles from the period.

Janina Safran looks at two chronicles from the tenth century which "portray Umayyad rule in al-Andalus as divinely guided and part of the fulfillment of a special destiny for the dynasty and the peninsula, thus providing a historical buttress for the caliph's reign and setting up his role as the great renewer."[43] Both the anonymous author of *Akhbār majmūʿah fī fatḥ al-Andalus* (*Collected Reports on the Conquest of al-Andalus*) and Abū Bakr ibn al-Qūṭiyyah (d. 366/977) in *Ta'rīkh iftitāḥ al-Andalus* (*History of the Conquest of al-Andalus*) base Umayyad legitimacy in the Islamic conquests of the Peninsula and the life of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III.[44] The author of the *Akhbār Majmūʿah*, in his treatment of the conquests, emphasizes the authority of the Syrian Umayyad Caliph even though he did not play a prominent role in the actual events. According to Safran, "The account of the conquest represents the caliphs in Damascus as the ultimate source of power and influence and as the final arbiters in disputes among the conquerors about the disposition of the captured spoils, land, and populations. In the account of the turbulent period of the early governors they are the guardians of stability and community."[45] Not only are the Umayyads praised for the establishment of Islam in the Peninsula, but the continuity of Islam is seen in the shift of caliphal authority from the Umayyads of Damascus to those of Cordoba.

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[40] Q 4:59.
[41] Safran, *The Second Umayyad Caliphate*, 67.
[42] Ibid., 58-97.

The character and strength of the first Umayyad in al-Andalus, ʿAbd al-Rahman I, and the founder of the Cordoban Umayyad Caliphate, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III, are contrasted with the treachery and weakness of the ʿAbbāsids. The *Akhbār Majmūʿah* emphasizes the courage of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān I on his journey to al-Andalus as it vilifies the ʿAbbāsids for their treachery that made such a journey necessary.[46] The ʿAbbāsid Caliph al-Manṣūr is then portrayed showing grudging respect for ʿAbd al-Raḥmān I. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān is also portrayed as following in the footsteps of Muʿāwiyah and ʿAbd al-Malik, "both of whom were founders in the history of the dynasty and also had to triumph over civil war. . . This evocation of a recurring pattern affirms the important continuity of Umayyad authority in a new context, while the magnitude of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's achievements offers the expectation of an even more significant renewal."[47] This renewal is embodied in ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III and the establishment of the Umayyad Caliphate in Cordoba. The *Akhbār Majmūʿah*'s portrayal of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III suggests he "was destined to retrace the footsteps of his eponym and reclaim his Umayyad inheritance, directing a new conquest from west to east."[48]

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[43] Ibid., 119-20. She also notes these histories are made up of a compilation of accounts without attribution.
[44] Ibn al-Qūṭiyyah traced his own lineage to the Visigoths, but his family had converted and was a client of the Umayyads from the period of the conquest. His ancestors had facilitated the Umayyad Muslim conquest. Consequently Ibn al-Qūṭiyyah's history of the conquests and portrayal of the Umayyads emphasizes the Umayyad conquests as destroying illegitimate Visigothic rule in Spain and affirms the alliance between the "royal" house of the Umayyads and his own family of Witiza. Ibid., 132.
[45] Ibid., 121.

The *Akhbār Majmūʿah* and Ibn al-Qūṭiyyah dramatize and heighten the significance of Umayyad victories over the ʿAbbāsids. ʿAbd al-Raḥman I finally banished the ʿAbbāsid threat to his life and rule when he won a decisive victory over a rebellion in Beja launched under the black banners of the ʿAbbāsids. According to Safran, "the final moment of the accounts represents the enduring rivalry of the two dynasties and the (renewed) Umayyad challenge to Abbasid rule: ʿAbd al-Raḥmān sent the heads of the leaders of the rebellion to Qayrawān as a message to the Abbasid caliph al-Manṣūr."[49] Ibn al-Qūṭiyyah highlights further the personal rivalry between Manṣūr and ʿAbd al-Raḥmān. When the head arrived and Manṣūr saw what had happened to his commander, he exclaimed: "Thank God for putting a sea between us and this kind of enemy!"[50] Ibn al-Qūṭiyyah continues throughout his narrative to develop the idea of a demarcation between ʿAbbāsid and Umayyad spheres of authority.[51] This would have been particularly significant in the tenth century; as Umayyad rule experienced its highest degree of potency and ʿAbbāsid rule were threatened from within by the Shīʿite Būyids and from without by the Shīʿite Fāṭimids.

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[46] After the success of the ʿAbbāsid Revolution, the ʿAbbāsids invited the Umayyads to a dinner of reconciliation, but after all the Umayyads were gathered together in one tent, the ʿAbbāsids slaughtered them all. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān escaped because he was out hunting and missed the invitation and was then warned not to attend.

[47] Ibid., 130-1.

[48] Ibid., 131.

The Umayyad Caliphate's claims to legitimacy encouraged greater interest in the first Umayyad Caliphate, the rights of the caliph generally, and the religio-political rivalry with the ʿAbbāsid and Fāṭimid Caliphates. Perhaps it is not surprising then that this period also produced an anonymous treatise entitled *Al-Imāmah wa'l-siyāsah* (*The Imāmate and Government*).[52] The *Imāmah* was once thought to have been written by Ibn Qutayba (d. 276/889), but now it seems clear it was written by an Andalusian, and probably one writing during the Umayyad Caliphate.[53] The *Imāmah* begins with the virtues and reigns of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar and ends with the reign of the ʿAbbāsid Caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd (d. 193/809). Nevertheless, Muʿāwiyah is clearly the hero of the narrative, occupying center stage for more than a fifth of it. Moreover, the section on the Umayyad caliphate of Damascus emphasizes the conquests of Africa and al-Andalus. This Andalusian perspective shapes the relatively brief, nine-page narrative of ʿUthmān as well. The *Imāmah* is not interested in defending ʿUthmān, ʿAlī, or the Companions. Rather both sides in the conflict are presented in such a way as to undermine ʿAbbāsid and Fāṭimid legitimacy, while strengthening that of Muʿāwiyah and his descendents, the Umayyads.

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[49] Ibid., 138.

[50] Ibn al-Qūṭiyyah, *Ta'rīkh iftitah al-Andalus* (Historia de la conquista de España de Abenalcotia el Cordobés, ed. and trans., Julián Ribera (Madrid, Revista de Archivos, 1926), 25-26; quoted in Ibid., 138.

[51] In the tenth century ʿAbbāsid rule in Qayrawān and Mecca was being contested.

[52] *Al-Imāmah wa'l-siyāsah*, ed. Ṭaḥa Muhammad al-Zaynī, n.d.

[53] Gérard Lecomte concludes the attribution to Ibn Qutayba is apocryphal, noting that Ibn Qutayba did not show any interest in the western Islamic lands. Lecomte believes a more likely attribution would be Ibn Qutiyya (d. 367/977), although he does not assert this conclusively. Lecomte, *Ibn Qutayba (mort en 278/889): l'homme, son oeuvre, ses idées* (Damascus: insitut francais de Damas, 1965), 174-176. Mahmud ʿAlī Makki, a prominent scholar of Andalusian historiography, notes that it is not so important who wrote it, but that it was widely read and had a significant impact on later histories. Maḥmūd ʿAlī Makki, "Egypt and the origins of Arabic Spanish Historiography: A Contribution to the

Al-Imāmah wa'l-siyāsah

The *Imāmah* contrasts the threat posed to the caliphate and the community by the rivalry between ʿUthmān and ʿAlī with Muʿāwiyah's efforts to preserve both. This is conveyed first of all through the degree of *Realpolitik* in the narrative; it is not idealized sacred history. The author makes no effort to defend ʿUthmān or the Companions. To the extent that the Companions were united, they were united in their criticism of ʿUthmān. Nevertheless ʿAlī did not have a greater right to the caliphate. The second notable feature is the prominent role of Muʿāwiyah in working to resolve the tensions between the two sides in the conflict. The author appears to be putting forward the Umayyad Caliphate as the solution to the Sunnī-Shīʿite, ʿAbbāsid-Fāṭimid division in the Islamic world.

Study of Earliest Sources for the History of Islamic Spain," in *The Formation of al-Andalus Part 2: Language, Religion, Culture, and the Sciences*, ed. Maribel Fierro and Julio Samsó. Publication of *The Formation of the Classical Islamic World*, ed. Lawrence I. Conrad, vol. 47 (Brookfield: Ashgate, 1998), 232.

The author's treatment of ᶜUthmān's *shūrā* and *bayᶜa* emphasizes the importance of unity and is largely indifferent to the details that the ᶜAbbāsids or Fāṭimids could use in their own defense. The *Imāmah* does not venerate ᶜAlī, ᶜUthmān, or the Companions. The *shūrā* members do not appear either in the guise of an ideal unity, or pursuing selfish tribal and personal interests that threaten the community. They were unable to agree on one person and so ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān b. ᶜAwf suggested he remove himself in order to make the final decision and the other members agreed to this.[54] When Ibn ᶜAwf asked three of the *shūrā* members whom they wanted as caliph, one chose ᶜUthmān, another ᶜAlī, and another ᶜAbd al-Rahmān b. ᶜAwf.[55] The decision then was between ᶜUthman and ᶜAlī, but without any evidence that they were the obvious choice or the preference of the majority.

ᶜUthmān's abilities as caliph and ᶜAlī's efforts to become caliph are criticized from the very beginning. ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān gave ᶜUthmān the oath of allegiance because he agreed to follow the *sunnah* of the Prophet, his two predecessors, and the Qur'ān.[56] ᶜUthmān also promised to not place the Quraysh upon the necks of the people. Nevertheless, when Ibn ᶜAwf gathered the people in the mosque, he admitted to ᶜAlī that many people were not happy with ᶜUthmān as their caliph. But Ibn ᶜAwf urged ᶜAlī not to use this for his own advantage, warning that if he did so swords would be loosened in the community.[57] This startling admission undermines ᶜUthmān's character, but upholds the principle of loyalty to the caliph. It also denies any special claims for ʿAlī and criticizes his supporters who would bring division and bloodshed into the community.[58]

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[54] *Al-Imāmah*, 30.
[55] Is this a play on names in which the eponym of the Umayyads of Cordoba is presented as having equal right to the caliphate, but willingly deferring that right?
[56] account based on al-Miswar b. Makhramah
[57] Ibid., 30.

This ambivalence towards the two main religio-political groupings and the Companions continues in the *Imāmah*'s description of ʿUthmān's first sermon. The common accounts of ʿUthmān's sermon describe a moving speech in which he exhorted the community to care more for the next world than for this one, to pursue justice, to command right and forbid wrong. The counter-narrative describes ʿUthmān mounting the *minbar*, sitting in the Prophet's chair, unable to say anything. However, the *Imāmah* relies on an account of the sermon from al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, which places blame on deteriorating economic circumstances. The account is as follows:

> I heard him say, "O people, come and take your gifts," so they came and took abundant gifts. "O people, come take your clothes," and they came and divided suits of clothing among them. Until by God I heard him cry out: "O community of Muslims, come take butter and honey." And they came and took butter and honey and divided among themselves butter and honey. Then he said, "O community of Muslims, come and take sweet smelling perfume (*ṭayyib*)," and they came and divided among themselves sweet fragrances of musk, amber and other scents. And enmity (*ʿudwān*), by God, was banished (*manfīy*) and the gifts flowed copiously (*dārrah*) and goodness abounded, and in the land no believer feared another believer, and whoever met in any country, then he was his brother, his ally (*alīf*), his protector, and his educator (*muʾaddib*). And goods continued abundantly until it was that a slave girl (*jāriyah*) was sold for her weight in gold coins (*waraqān*), a stallion was sold for 10,000 dīnārs, a camel for 1,000, and a single date palm for 1,000 dīnārs. Then the people despised ʿUthmān for things impertinent (*ashiran*) and arrogant (*baṭaran*).[59]

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[58] Ibid., 31. The account concludes: "ʿUthmān was six years in his reign and he loved the people of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb. And ʿUmar was a strong man who had restrained the Quraysh. . . Then when ʿUthmān governed them they were governed by a soft and pliant man."
[59] Ibid.

This account completely sidesteps issues of religious innovation or political corruption. ʿUthmān is praised for his generosity and it seems intentionally ambiguous whether he was to blame for the deteriorating circumstances. The ambiguity continues with Ibn ʿUmar's concluding observation: "For those things which had been considered blameworthy (*ʿaib*) against him, if ʿUmar had done them it would not have been viewed as blameworthy on his part."[60]

The *Imāmah* goes on, however, to discuss the Companions' criticisms of ʿUthmān.[61] These include most of the usual complaints; however, some of them are placed in a slightly different perspective. For example, rather than favoring his family, ʿUthmān is accused of pampering the Medinese. And not only are the Medinese criticized for late conversion to Islam, but for not engaging in raids or defending Islam. This criticism shifts the blame of favoring late converts away from the Umayyads to the Medinese and it suggests the importance of expanding and defending Islam in the Peninsula.[62] This theme is continued in a letter from Ṭalḥah to al-Ashtar. The letter opens: "In the name of God the merciful and compassionate, from the first *muhājirīn* and the remainder of the *shūrā* to those in Egypt from among the Companions and the first generation of followers (*tābiʿīn*)." Thus it was the first

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[60] Ibid. 32. This theme is continued under the subsection: "what was held against ʿUthmān." The first account tells of a group gathering and rejecting ʿUthmān which prompted ʿUthmān to address them from the *minbar*. He told them they were holding against him things that they had agreed to with ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb and that he had more supporters than Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb. Ibid. This is also the first substantial *isnād*: "ʿAbdallāh b. Muslim said, Ibn Abī Maryam and Ibn ʿAfīr reported to us saying: Ibn ʿAwn reported to us." Ibid., 35. A variant account with different *isnād* appears in al-Ṭabarī.

[61] In addition to the common complaints held against ʿUthmān, the *Imāmah* adds what appears to be a uniquely Andalusian concern in which ʿUthmān was accused of not being as ambitious in the conquests as his two predecessors. Ibid., 35.

[62] The criticism of the Medinese probably also refers to their rebellion against Muʿāwiyah's son and successor, al-Yazīd.

Umayyad converts who were calling for a restoration of right government. The letter distances ʿUthmān from this honorable group, however, when it describes ʿUthmān's reign as having become a "kingship that was snapping up everything in sight."[63] The Companions, in particular, ʿAlī, ʿĀʾishah, Ṭalḥah, and al-Zubayr, are shown together in their opposition to ʿUthmān.[64] This undermines the claims of all of them to be ʿUthmān's defender or rightful successor.

The author's ambivalence towards ʿUthmān and the Companions continues in his description of the murder. In ʿUthmān's defense are reports that some sons of Companions were with him in the house, he refused to fight, and kept others from doing so as well.[65] But in ʿUthmān's vision it was Abū Bakr and ʿUmar, not Muḥammad, who promised he would breakfast in Paradise that day.[66] Nor is ʿUthmān described taking up the Qurʾān and reading from it until after Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr had come in, grabbed him by the beard and insulted him. Nevertheless, upon ʿUthmān reminding him of his father, Ibn Abī Bakr left.[67] The *Imāmah* includes accounts of the Kufans and Egyptians who struck ʿUthmān. Although these are violent enough, he does not develop the imagery any more than he did that of ʿUthmān's pious and patient suffering.[68]

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[63] Ibid., 37-38.

[64] He also describes the Egyptians writing to ʿAlī *and* ʿĀʾishah about their complaints. Together they approached ʿUthmān and suggested he appoint Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr as the new governor in Egypt. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr set out for Egypt and the account makes a point of stating a number of *muhajirūn* and *anṣār* were with him. Ibid., 39. After the news of the letter to the Egyptian governor, the hearts of everyone were turned against ʿUthmān. The *Imāmah* provides no defense for the letter. ʿUthmān denied any knowledge of it, but he could not deny that it was his camel, servant, and seal. ʿAlī wanted to know how this could happen without him knowing about it. Ibid., 42.

[65] Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr and his companions were able to enter ʿUthmān's room because ʿUthmān's defenders were all on the roof defending the house.

[66] Ibid., 41.

[67] The account makes a point of stating he did leave and did not enter again with those who did in fact strike and kill ʿUthmān. Ibid., 44.

Although the author does little to defend ʿUthmān or the Companions, he does defend the caliphate and through it, the unity of the community.[69] In the confrontations that took place during the siege, ʿUthmān urged them not to kill him, pointing out that God calls for listening and obedience and that ʿUthmān was clothed with a shirt of authority from God. He also warned them of the evil consequences that would ensue of divisions within the community.[70] These are all common defenses in the literature for ʿUthmān and the caliphate, often reiterated in the letter ʿUthmān wrote for Ibn ʿAbbās to read out to the pilgrims gathered in Mecca. But whereas the letter recorded in al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Aʿtham, and Ibn Shabbah relies on Qurʾanic verses to further defend the caliphate and the unity of the community, in the *Imāmah*, ʿUthmān merely pointed out he was besieged and cut off from food and water. The focus of the account shifts away from the content of the letter to the fact that Ibn ʿAbbās was the one reading it and that after he had finished his sermon he wrote to Muʿāwiyah and the Syrians appealing for help.[71]

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[68] The account states it was a Kufan who entered with a stake in his hand and struck ʿUthmān so that his blood flowed onto the Qur'ān. And another came and kicked him with his foot and another came with his sword drawn and struck him. Then an Egyptian entered and took him by the beard and cut off part of it. Then another man came in and stabbed ʿUthmān in the stomach. His wife, Nāʾilah, grabbed the sword and her fingers were severed. Nāʾilah ran out screaming and the band escaped by the way they had entered. Ibid., 44-5.

[69] He says very little in defense of ʿUthmān personally, beyond that he bought the well of Rūmah and enlarged the mosque, and was promised Paradise for this. But then he also records Ṭalḥah's rejoinder that ʿUthmān had changed.

[70] Ibid. The crowd responded to this, however, by shooting arrows at him so that he withdrew into the house. ʿAbdallāh b. Salām came out and told them that ʿUthmān had the same right to their obedience as a father does his sons', Medina was defended by 12,000 angels, and if they killed ʿUthmān God would disperse His angels and unsheathe His sword against the community. But all this was rejected and the band continued to shoot arrows.

In contrast to ʿUthmān's weak leadership, the divisions within the community, and the disrespect shown for the caliphate, the *Imāmah* holds up Muʿāwiyah's decisive leadership and the support he commanded in Syria as crucial for the survival of the caliphate and the unity of the community. The *Imāmah* includes an account I have never seen before in which Muʿāwiyah is portrayed negotiating with other Companions to keep ʿUthmān in power.[72] The conflict is clearly drawn between those who support ʿAlī and those who support ʿUthmān, but Muʿāwiyah did not argue based on ʿUthmān's superior virtue or right to the caliphate, but on the superior strength of Syria behind him. For example, he approached ʿAmmār b. Yāsir and said, "There are 100,000 obedient horsemen in Syria, along with sons and slaves – who do not know ʿAlī or his family nor ʿAmmār and his ancestors nor al-Zubayr and his friends nor Ṭalḥah and his early conversion, nor honor Ibn ʿAwf and his wealth."[73] Muʿāwiyah continued by pointing out that if they did not take heed of this support for ʿUthmān in Syria, then *fitnah* would break out in the community and there would be mass violence and it would end with someone killing ʿUthmān and someone killing ʿAlī. His prediction was correct and the bloodshed continued. This interpretation of events implies Muʿāwiyah and his successors, the Umayyads, were and are the only solution for a divided community.

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[71] Ibid., 38.
[72] The account merely begins "he said" and may or may not be a continuation of the preceding account.
[73] Ibid., 32.

The Umayyads' rights over the ʿAbbāsids' and Fāṭimids' is further expressed in a conversation between Muʿāwiyah and Ibn ʿAbbās. Muʿāwiyah reminded Ibn ʿAbbās that before Islam his people, the Banū Umayyah, outnumbered Ibn ʿAbbās's, the Banū Hāshim, but they never oppressed, defeated, or abandoned them. Muʿāwiyah admitted that ʿAlī was the first to convert to Islam and that he hated the polytheism of the Umayyads. But then they too embraced Islam and the responsibility of governing fell on them both. According to Muʿāwiyah, however, it went to ʿUthmān, rather than ʿAlī, because ʿUthmān was older. By complaining against this, Ibn ʿAbbās and his people "have ignited an unquenchable fire."[74] By addressing the Banū Hāshim, Muʿāwiyah jointly criticizes the ʿAlids and the ʿAbbāsids for dividing the community.[75] Ibn ʿAbbās repeated and agreed with Muʿāwiyah's summary of events, including the fact that ʿUthmān "took the rule because he was preferable (*afḍal*) because of his age."[76] But Ibn ʿAbbās also defended their complaints against ʿUthmān by stating they were only repeating what everyone was saying. Repeatedly the *Imāmah* distinguishes between defending ʿUthmān and defending the caliphate.

The prominence of Muʿāwiyah and the rights of his descendents are developed further in another account in which ʿUthmān and the Companions appear incompetent and divided. As disappointment with ʿUthmān grew, he was urged by Muʿāwiyah to call a meeting of the Companions to discuss various grievances.[77] It was Muʿāwiyah who addressed the group and summarized their history since Muḥammad's death and emphasized that they had all sworn allegiance to ʿUthmān.[78] But ʿAlī interjected that it seemed as if Muʿāwiyah wanted the caliphate for himself. Muʿāwiyah responded that those who were complaining were "like a black birthmark on a white robe and meddling recklessly with cursing and betraying their caliph."[79] He urged them to avoid such folly, and instead to be patient with what they did not like. Having argued above that the caliphate was in the hands of the Umayyads, Muʿāwiyah then urged loyalty to the caliph, regardless of his conduct.

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[74] Ibid.
[75] It also associates the ʿAbbāsids with the Shīʿites as supporters of ʿAlī.
[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid., 33.

The *Imāmah* continues to contrast Muʿāwiyah's support for ʿUthmān and the caliphate with the Companions' attack on both. After the above meeting ʿUthmān asked Muʿāwiyah what he should do. In response Muʿāwiyah asked for permission to strike the necks of "those dissidents." And when ʿUthmān asked, "Who?" Muʿāwiyah replied: "ʿAlī, Ṭalḥah and al-Zubayr."[80] ʿUthmān was shocked and said he could not strike the Companions of the Prophet. Muʿāwiyah warned him that if he did not kill them, they would kill him. But ʿUthmān insisted he would not be the first to shed blood. So Muʿāwiyah suggested sending troops from Syria, but ʿUthmān said he could not support them from the treasury. So Muʿāwiyah suggested dispersing the dissidents, but again ʿUthmān said he could not remove the Companions of the Prophet and those of the *shūrā* from their homes. So Muʿāwiyah asked for permission to demand retribution for ʿUthmān's blood if they killed him. ʿUthmān granted him this, *if* they killed him.[81] In contrast to ʿUthmān's weakness and the Companions' rebellion, Muʿāwiyah was the defender of the caliphate and the unity of the community. Moreover, ʿUthmān blessed Muʿāwiyah's efforts to do so through avenging his blood – initiating a course of events which ultimately established Umayyad rule.

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[78] This may support Landau-Tasseron's argument that the *bayʿa* became the legitimator of government after the Prophet's death. Landau-Tasseron, "From Tribal Society to Centralized Polity," 187.
[79] *Imāmah*, 33.
[80] Ibid., 34.

The *Imāmah* concludes the narrative of ʿUthmān by reiterating the transfer of authority to the Umayyads. After ʿUthmān's murder the people gathered in the mosque; many of them regretted what had happened and blamed Ṭalḥah and al-Zubayr. But Ṭalḥah claimed, "ʿUthmān mixed wrongdoing with repentance until we despised his government."[82] Both he and al-Zubayr insisted that the matter of ʿUthmān was now with God, and Al-Zubayr urged them to give the oath of allegiance to ʿAlī. But murdering a caliph cannot be so easily forgotten. The account continues by pointing out that ʿUthmān's wife, Nāʾilah, wrote to Muʿāwiyah and sent him ʿUthmān's bloody shirt and Qurʾān and described how the band had entered ʿUthmān's chamber and what Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr had done.[83] This not only suggests the event should not be forgotten, but, more importantly, it describes a symbolic transfer of political and religious authority to Muʿāwiyah. However, despite the political and ideological strength of the Cordoban caliphate asserted by the *Imāmah*, Muʿāwiyah's descendents quickly suffered a fate very similar to their ʿAbbāsid rivals.

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[81] ʿUthmān's reasons for not defending himself or taking precautionary measures appear in many sources, but I have not seen in any other source the latter part of this exchange legitimating Muʿāwiyah's actions.
[82] Ibid., 47.
[83] Ibid.

THE PARTY-KINGS (422-483/1031-1090)

Whereas in the east internal divisions and weaknesses were exploited by Turkish warriors and Shīʿite missionaries, in the west they were exploited by Christians and Berbers. Between 404/1013 and 422/1031 a string of weaker and weaker caliphs took the throne, unable to survive the surrounding power struggles, until the Umayyad Caliphate was abolished in 422/1031.[84] The caliphate in the west dissolved into a number of small statelets, ruled by amīrs known as the *ṭāʾifah* rulers or "party kings," deriving from the Arabic word *ṭāʾifah*, meaning "party" or "faction." Some of these adopted the title caliph, but it is not clear what this was intended to mean and the reasons for it varied depending on the particular circumstances and political situation of each city.[85] Collectively, however, the Party-Kings were known for their loose living and collusion with various Christian rulers in order to strengthen their own position against Muslim rivals. The parallels with political developments in the east were accompanied by literary and ideological parallels as well.

ʿAbbāsid writers of the third/ninth and early fourth/tenth century could debate the tensions arising from early Islamic history from a position of strength. But in the face of the weakening caliphate and the Shīʿite challenges of the latter tenth and eleventh centuries, Sunnī writers abandoned the universal chronicle and turned more and more to *ḥadīth*-based idealized biographies of early Islamic figures. A similar shift took place in al-Andalus between tenth century Umayyad rule and that of the Party-Kings in the eleventh century. Abū Muḥammad ʿAlī ibn Ḥazm al-Andalusī (384-456/994-1064) and his friend, Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr al-Numayrī al-Qurṭubī (368-463/978-1070),[86] both wrote largely *ḥadīth*-based laudatory biographies of the Companions.[87] Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr wrote *Al-Istīʿāb fī maʿrifat al-aṣḥāb* (*Study of the Knowledge of the Companions of the Prophet*)[88] while Ibn Ḥazm's biography of ʿUthmān is found in his *Kitāb fiṣal fī al-milal wa-l-ahwāʾ al-niḥāl* (*Book of Chapters Dealing with Religions and Sects and Creeds*).[89]

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[84] See Wasserstein, *The Caliphate in the West*, Fierro, "Caliphal Legitimacy," and "On Political Legitimacy" for an extended study of the ramifications of this act.

[85] David Wasserstein considers the quick dissolution of the caliphate and the periodic use of the title afterwards as further evidence of the absence of ideological basis for the Umayyads. Wasserstein, *The Caliphate in the West*, 154. As stated above, however, this claim has been contested by Maribel Fierro and Janina Safran. Safran attributes the fall of the Umayyads to the misfortunes of history. Al-Ḥakam II was succeeded by his twelve-year old son leaving the caliphate open to abuse and manipulation by others. She concludes her study by stating: "The history of the Andalusi Umayyad caliphate in effect turned out to be a history of three generations, and yet the span of years between ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III's ascendance and Ḥishām II's disappearance (912-1013) comprised a full century and actually exceeded the length of the first Umayyad caliphate (661-750)." Safran, *The Second Umayyad Caliphate*, 195.

Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr

Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr presents a brief laudatory biography of ʿUthmān in which he presents all of the familiar defenses for ʿUthmān's character and none of the criticisms of his caliphate. In response to one vague criticism from ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ about committing a sin, ʿUthmān immediately stood up, faced the *qiblah* and repented. This is immediately followed in the narrative by ʿUthmān's sermon in self-defense; it is a variation of ʿUthmān's first sermon found in the *Imāmah.* The account from al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī begins with ʿUthmān crying out: "O people do you take vengeance on me while no day passes without your apportioning wealth and benefits?"[90] Al-Ḥasan then reported how he heard the caller inviting the people to come and receive honey, butter, and other good things, as recorded in the *Imāmah.* However, whereas the *Imāmah* goes on to speak about the deteriorating economic situation, Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr continues to defend the generosity of ʿUthmān and instead blames the greed of the Medinese helpers (*anṣār*). This is similar to the way the *Imāmah* shifts blame away from the Umayyad Companions. However, whereas the *Imāmah* accuses ʿUthmān of favoring the Medinese, in Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr's account Ḥasan al-Baṣrī continued by stating ʿUthmān "loves, defends, and deals cordially with all believers on earth without exception." The account of the sermon in Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr concludes:

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[86] Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr "studied in his native city under masters of repute, engaged in correspondence with scholars of the East and traveled all over Spain 'in search of knowledge,' but never went to the East. Considered one of the best traditionists of his time, he was equally distinguished in *fiqh* and in the science of genealogy." Charles Pellat, "Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr," *EI²*. Abou El Fadl credits Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr with a synthesis between Mālikī, Shāfiʿī, and Ẓāhirī views on the law of rebellion, *Rebellion & Violence*, 208.

[87] This literary shift may also have been due to the growing acceptance and development of *ḥadīth* sciences in the Peninsula. Both authors do use *isnāds* more consistently then their predecessors. But that this shift in outlook and literary style corresponded with political developments suggests additional factors were involved.

[88] Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr al-Numayrī, *Al-Istīʿāb fī maʿrifat al-aṣḥāb*, ed. ʿAlī Muḥammad al-Bukhārī (Cairo: Maktabat nahḍah Maṣr wa-maṭbaʿatihā, n.d.).

[89] Ibn Ḥazm, *Kitāb fiṣal fī al-milal wa-l-ahwāʾ al-niḥāl wa kitāb al-milal wa 'l-niḥal lil-Imām Abī al-fatḥ ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Shahrastānī* (Baghdad: maktabat al-muthannā, n.d.).

> If the *anṣār* had resisted selfishness, they would have been sufficiently sustained by the gifts and daily provisions (*rizq*) which they had. But they did not remain patient and unsheathed their swords with those who unsheathed theirs. Therefore their swords became sheathed with unbelievers and unsheathed and raised in the face of Muslims until the Day of Judgment.[91]

Blame is placed not only on greedy members of the community, but the eternal consequences of this. The community became divided as Muslims fought each other. And if this was not bad enough, it also meant that Muslims failed to fight unbelievers. The analysis fits exactly the situation in al-Andalus during the reign of the Party-Kings.

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[90] Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, 1041.

[91] Ibid.

Ibn Ḥazm

Ibn Ḥazm's writings reflect literary and ideological trends regarding the Companions and early Islamic history, but the caliphate and sectarian divisions in general.[92] He subscribed to the ultra-conservative Ẓāhirī school of religious thought and legal practice.[93] Ibn Ḥazm's understanding of the caliphate was not only strongly pro-Umayyad in opposition to the Umayyad pretenders and the Party-Kings of his own day, it was also strongly anti-Shīʿite. In this he was attacking the claims of the Idrisids of North Africa who were making incursions into al-Andalus.[94] These concerns come through clearly in his writing. Among Ibn Ḥazm's numerous works few are still extant; he is best known by modern scholars for his *Jamharat ansāb al-ʿarab* (*Collection of Lineages of the Arabs*)[95] and his history of the Umayyad

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[92] Perhaps this was because his own life was more directly affected by the political chaos that followed the collapse of the Umayyad Caliphate. See R. Arnaldez, "Ibn Ḥazm," *EI*^{2} and Abdel Magid Turki, "L'Engagement politique et la théorie du califat d'Ibn Ḥazm," in *Théologiens et juristes de l'Espagne Musulmane: aspects polémiques*, 69-99 (Paris: Editions G.-P. Maisonneuve et Larose, 1982). This is a volume from a series: Islam d'hier et d'aujourd'hui, collection dirigée par A.M. Turki. This particular volume in the series is a collection of articles by A.M. Turki originally published elsewhere. The one on the political engagement of Ibn Ḥazm was first published in volume 2 of "Mélanges H. Laoust," *Bulletin d'études orientales de l'institut francais de Damas*, XXX (Damascus, 1978). A.M. Turki compares the caliphal theory found in Ibn Ḥazm, al-Mawārdī, and al-Ghazālī and concludes that Ibn Ḥazm's theoretical perspective was clearly shaped by his own life experience and the concerns of the caliphate in al-Andalus.

[93] See A.M. Turki, "al-Ẓāhiriyya," *EI*^{2}. Khaled Abou El Fadl also notes, "Ibn Ḥazm seems to have developed his own group of loyal followers known as the Ḥazmiyya." *Rebellion & Violence*, 210.

[94] Turki, "L'Engagment," 80. The Idrisid rulers claimed descent from ʿAlī. Along these same lines, Turki adds that Ibn Ḥazm rejected the possibility of the proclamation of two caliphs in proximity to each other and argued for the necessity of a single Qurayshī caliphate. Ibid., 77. In his discussion of the character of the imām he venerates ʿAlī himself, but denies that his family inherits any merit or right to the caliphate. Ibid., 79.

[95] Peter C. Scales argues that when the Umayyad Caliphate failed, Ibn Ḥazm turned to emphasizing Arabism as a way of glorifying the Andalusians and sought to highlight the tribal linkages between the east and west. He states that in this work Ibn Ḥazm "reflects his concern to stress the genealogical links connecting Spain and the *umm al-bilād* (motherland) of the principal Arab tribes." Scales, *The Fall of the Caliphate of Córdoba: Berbers and Andalusis in Conflict*. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994), 26.

Caliphate, *Naqṭ al-ʿarūs fī tawārīkh al-khulafāʾ*,[96] as well as his *Kitāb fiṣal fī'l-milal wa'l-ahwāʾ al-niḥāl.*

In *Kitāb fiṣal fī'l-milal wa'l-ahwāʾ al-niḥāl* Ibn Ḥazm provides a brief biography of ʿUthmān in which he argues that ʿUthmān was more virtuous than ʿAlī.[97] His entry is a *ḥadīth*-based character analysis rather than a historical treatment of ʿUthmān's caliphate. Ibn Ḥazm includes most of the familiar material with a few of what appear to be uniquely Andalusian concerns, such as jihād. For example, in his comparison of ʿUthmān and ʿAlī, Ibn Ḥazm points out that they were both virtuous in reciting the Qurʾān and that whereas ʿAlī had great standing in jihād, ʿUthmān had similar standing with his property, via the giving of his property for the benefit of the community.[98] However, he also points out that ʿUthmān's reign was a time of great conquests, greater than those of ʿAlī's reign, nor was it filled with civil war. He also draws parallels between Shīʿite beliefs and Jewish (or perceived Jewish) beliefs. He refers to a *ḥadīth* in which Muḥammad told ʿAlī that he was to him as Aaron was to Moses. But according to Ibn Ḥazm, this did not constitute a "banner (*rāyah*) tomorrow," or a designation forever. Similarly, he points out that the praise given to

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[96] The title is translated: "beauty spots of the newly-wed, which deal with notices of the Umayyad caliphs of al-Andalus." Peter Scales believes this comes from an Arabic expression that when the newlywed washes her beauty spots they disappear. "Thus, just as the 'beauty spots of the newly-wed' are of little importance and are 'washed away', Ibn Ḥazm was indicating to his readers that his work was a collection of anecdotes about the caliphs and their wives, that were of little or no substance." Ibid., 25.

[97] The entry on ʿUthmān appears in the exact same form in a letter from Ibn Ḥazm. In this letter ʿUthmān's biography is preceded by a section on the virtues of the wives of the Prophet and then several sections on the superiority of Abū Bakr to ʿAlī. Saʿīd al-Afghānī, ***Ibn Ḥazm al-Andalusī wa-risālah fī al-mufāḍalah bayn al-Ṣaḥābah*** (Damascus: Al-Maktabah al-Hāshimiyyah al-Aṣḥaba Muḥammad Ḥāshim al-kutubī wa-sharikat bi-Dimashq, 1940).

[98] Ibn Ḥazm, *Fiṣal*, 147.

ʿAlī that he loved God and his Prophet and therefore God and his Prophet loved him, in truth applies to all Muslims.[99]

Comparison between Shīʿite and Jewish heresies may be common in the heresy literature, but I have not seen it appear in quite this way in the narratives of ʿUthmān. Rather the connection is usually presented in the form of the Sabāʾiyyah heresy. Indeed Shīʿism arguably began with the Sabāʾiyyah who revolted against ʿUthmān and were led by the converted Jew ʿAbdallāh b. Sabāʾ. In al-Ṭabarī's account from Sayf b. ʿUmar, Ibn Sabāʾ taught that Muḥammad would return like Jesus and that ʿUthmān had usurped the caliphate from ʿAlī, Muḥammad's rightful successor. But in the heresiographic literature the beliefs of the Sabāʾiyyah and the Shīʿites were conflated into claims that the Sabāʾiyyah smuggled into Islam the belief that ʿAlī was divine, just as the Apostle Paul did with Christianity.[100] Ibn Ḥazm, interestingly, does not mention the Sabāʾiyyah in his biography of ʿUthmān, for there is no indication whatsoever of unrest or the causes of it during ʿUthmān's caliphate. However, Ibn Ḥazm does attack the Sabāʾiyyah and all variants of Shīʿite heresy in other parts of his writings against heresy and sects, in which he also employs a sarcastic and rationalist tone similar to al-Jāḥiẓ.[101] Thus while his biographies are consistent with writings on the Companions throughout the Islamic world in the eleventh century, his critical use of earlier sources and aggressive tone hint at future developments in the narrative of ʿUthmān.

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[99] Ibid., 148. From these arguments Ibn Ḥazm moves on to address the superiority of those who were at Badr and gave the oath of allegiance to Muḥammad (having earlier shown ʿUthmān was included in these groups), and then those who were promised Paradise. The section is then followed by about ten pages on which Companions fought against ʿAlī.

[100] Israel Friedländer, "The Heterodoxies of the Shiites According to Ibn Ḥazm," *JAOS* 29 (1908): 16.

[101] Ibid., 56. He quotes al-Jāḥiẓ, although he also questions his orthodoxy. See also Friedländer, "The Heterodoxies of the Shiites According to Ibn Ḥazm," *JAOS* 28 (1907): 1-80.

Ibn Ḥazm's criticism of heresy as a threat to the unity of the community was accompanied by his defense of the caliphate as the guarantor of unity. In the *Fiṣal* Ibn Ḥazm sets out the eight minimum requirements of a legitimate caliph, foremost of which was that he had to be a descendent of Quraysh.[102] The Umayyads had for the most part met all his requirements; moreover, they had established a hereditary line, which was equally important to Ibn Ḥazm, who valued the stability this brought to government. He states in the *Fiṣal*: "I prefer this form of designation. . . because only with it can I see that continuity of the religious and temporal authority, the good organization and perfect order of Islamic social life and the right of temporal life of the faithful is guaranteed."[103] Despite this emphasis on unity, Khaled Abou El Fadl finds willingness on Ibn Ḥazm's part to endorse rebellion against the unjust ruler.[104]

Despite Ibn Hazm's commitment to the caliphate, he was not writing under the Umayyads and was able to take a more idealistic approach to political principles. Based on Ibn Ḥazm's treatment of the law of rebellion in his *Al-Muḥallā bi'l-āthār*,

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[102] This was "followed by seven other prerequisites, including that he should have reached puberty, possess reason, be a Muslim and be instructed in the religious duties of all Muslims, have been designated canonically as caliph, and be of moral standing." *Fiṣal*, vol. V, pp. 24-25; quoted in Scales, *The Fall of the Caliphate*, 26.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Although Ibn Ḥazm was a Ẓāhirī, his emphasis on weighing the moral standing of rulers and rebels was put forward also by a near contemporary Ibn Rushd I (d. 520/1122). According to Abou El Fadl, Ibn Rushd "adopts the traditional Sunnī position that neither ʿAlī nor those who rebelled against him were morally or religiously blameworthy." *Rebellion & Violence*, 251. But he also argues against moral relativism. "Therefore, using the example of the Companions, the import of Ibn Rushd's argument is that rebellion is at times justified, or even imperative. But shedding the blood of Muslims without sufficient cause or justification is sin." Ibid., 252. Abou El Fadl marks that the Mālikīs became a part of the vanguard of a "revisionist trend," denying the right of unjust rulers to resist rebels. Ibid., 250.

Abou El Fadl concludes: "Ibn Ḥazm is not interested in institutions or in the pragmatic applications of the law. His discourse is a form of uncompromising moralizing, and although throughout his argument he refers to the far more technical treatments of the other schools, he criticizes these schools for their failure to make the proper moral judgments, and for slavish adherence to precedent."[105] Ibn Ḥazm emphasized the need for a legitimate grievance or objection to religious innovation in order to qualify as a rebel rather than a mere bandit.[106] "Ibn Ḥazm demonstrates this point by arguing that Muʿāwiya, for example, refused to give ʿAlī his pledge of allegiance because ʿAlī had failed to capture and punish ʿUthmān's assassinators. Ibn Ḥazm argues that although Muʿāwiya's reasoning was ultimately wrong, this type of interpretation or cause is legally recognizable."[107] In the aftermath of the Umayyad Caliphate there is not the same need to glorify Muʿāwiyah.

Furthermore, in a time of political dissolution Ibn Ḥazm draws a distinction between those who rebel based on a legitimate difference in religious interpretation and those who fight merely to usurp power or for tribal loyalties. Ibn Ḥazm's commitments to right religion and political unity appear to be clearly in tension. Thus,

> Even when it comes to what Ibn Ḥazm considers to be purely political disputes, Ibn Ḥazm evaluates rebels according to an entirely pietistic and subjective standard. Those who he perceives as pious leaders are considered the rightful rulers, and those who fought them are seen as the rebels. Pursuant to this logic, it is Yazīd [b. Muʿāwiyah] who is the rebel and not Ibn al-

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[105] Ibid., 215-6.

[106] Those who deny basic aspects of the *sharīʿah*, that the imām should be from among the Quraysh, or hold to any Shīʿite doctrines do not constitute a legitimate grievance. Ibid., 214-5.

[107] Ibid., 211.

> Zubayr, regardless of the fact that it was Ibn al-Zubayr who challenged ʿUmayyad rule and was ultimately defeated.[108]

Ibn Ḥazm's willingness to criticize recognized rulers for moral failings no doubt stemmed in part from the trials of his own career and his frustration with the collusion between Mālikī jurists and the rulers.[109] Ultimately, however, the corruption and weakness of the Party-Kings became too much for the Mālikī jurists as well so that they played a key role in the overthrow of the Party-Kings by the Almoravids of North Africa.

THE ALMORAVIDS[110] (483-4567/1090-1171)

That the Andalusian *ʿulamāʾ* turned to the Almoravids for assistance is not surprising since the Almoravids were the strongest Muslim force in the region. In the north the Christians had slowly been growing in strength, but the fall of Toledo in 478/1085 to Alfonso VI, king of Leon-Castile, was a shocking blow to the Muslims of the Peninsula and signified just how vulnerable they were. The fall of Toledo motivated the *ʿulamāʾ* to take matters into their own hands; they contacted the leader of the Almoravids in North Africa. This marked a permanent reversal of influence in the relationship between North Africa and al-Andalus. The Almoravids, and their successors, the Almohads, who also originated in North Africa, played a major role in maintaining the struggle against the Christians of northern Spain for the next hundred and fifty years. It was no small thing, however, for the Andalusians to appeal to the Almoravids. Compared to the cultural and intellectual sophistication of al-Andalus, the Berbers were backward barbarians. But faced with the suzerainty of the Christians or the Almoravids, as one *ṭāʾifah* ruler concluded, it was better to herd camels than pigs.[111]

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[108] Ibid., 213. Michael Cook echoes this in his analysis of commanding right and forbidding wrong. He states: "Ibn Ḥazm in developing his doctrine of forbidding wrong takes the view that it is obligatory to reprove the ruler for any act of injustice, however small. If the ruler desists and submits to the appropriate penalty, well and good; if not, he must be deposed and another appointed in his place." *Commanding Right*, 478.

[109] Abou El Fadl provides the most succinct evaluation of Ibn Ḥazm's character and career. He writes, "Like his father, he served as a minister and state administrator under the ʿĀmirids of Valencia. However, early on in his life he abandoned all political positions and dedicated himself to scholarship. He is reported to have been a rather unpleasant and contentious character. He consequently won the animosity of most politicians and jurists, and died in exile." Ibid., 210-1. For more details on Ibn Ḥazm's life see Arnaldez and Turki.

[110] The name is derived from the Arabic, "*al-Murābiṭūn*." "This word was once assumed to be derived from a type of 'warrior-monk' who inhabited a *ribāṭ*, a fortified convent on the frontiers of Islam, and this sense is no doubt the correct one in several instances. However, as will be seen, the Saharan *Murābiṭūn* may well have regarded their name as metaphorical, a spiritual discipline rather than a literal toponymic or geographical nomenclature attached to a convent or retreat." H.T. Norris, "*Al-Murābiṭūn*," *EI*^{2}.

The Almoravids rose to power in North Africa early in the fifth/eleventh century upon embracing what scholars generally describe to be a pietistic and militaristic vision of Islam. The chief of a Saharan tribe, the Gudāla, returned from pilgrimage to Mecca wanting to bring religious reform to his people. With the help of a scholar from Fez, he established a government characterized by a strict enforcement of the *sharīʿah* and a narrow interpretation of the Qurʾān; conquest and conversion of other tribal groups quickly followed. Both men, however, were killed during the battles that consolidated Almoravid authority in western North Africa. In the second half of the eleventh century it was ʿAlī b. Yūsuf b. Tāshufīn (d. 500/1106-7) who exercised total authority and was responsible for the creation of the Almoravid state in North Africa and al-Andalus.[112]

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[111] Angus Mackay and Muhammad Benaboud, "Alfonso VI of León and Castille, 'al-Imbratur dhu-l-Millatayn'," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 56 (1979): 96.
[112] Norris, "*Al-Murābiṭūn.*"

The early years of the Almoravids in North Africa are noteworthy for their piety and militarism. However, by the time they entered Andalusian politics, first in military excursions against the Christian kings in 479/1086 and 481/1088 and finally (and permanently) in 483-4/1090-1, the Almoravids are best characterized by their concerted effort to "Islamize" Andalusian politics. They abolished non-Qur'anic taxes, focused on jihād against the Christians, removed the Party-Kings one by one, and sought recognition from the ʿAbbāsids in Baghdad. Political and military unity in al-Andalus and theoretical unity with the larger Sunnī Islamic world were central to their program for strengthening the Muslim community in Spain. These objectives were consistent with the desires of the *ʿulamāʾ* of al-Andalus. Consequently we see continuity rather than radical break in terms of religious and cultural life.[113] The Almoravids relied on a mutually supportive relationship with the local *ʿulamāʾ*. The Almoravids sought their advice on major decisions and gave political and military muscle to their desires.[114] In return, the *ʿulamāʾ* used their influence to support the Almoravids.

Perhaps the best known of the Andalusian *ʿulamāʾ* from the Almoravid period is Abū Bakr ibn al-ʿArabī (468-543/1076-1148).[115] A traditionist from Seville, Ibn al-ʿArabī traveled east with his father in 485/1092 to seek a title of investiture from the

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[113] Dominique Urvoy, *Le Monde des ulémas Andalous du V/XIᵉ au VII/XIIIᵉ Siècle* (Geneva:Librairie Droz, 1978): 29.

[114] Fierro, "La Religión," in *El Retroceso Territorial de al-Andalus: Almoravides y Almohades Siglos XI al XIII* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, S.A., 1997), 437. This relationship strengthened the Mālikism of al-Andalus.

[115] He is not to be confused with Muḥyi'l-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 638/1240), the great ṣūfī master. Muḥyi'l-Dīn is often referred to, incorrectly, as Ibn ʿArabī in order to distinguish him from Abū Bakr b. al-ʿArabī.

ʿAbbāsid caliph in Baghdad for the Almoravid amīr. Ibn al-ʿArabī studied for a time in Damascus and Baghdad, performed the pilgrimage to Mecca, and then returned to Baghdad where he studied under al-Ghazālī. He and his father then traveled on to Egypt and studied in Cairo and Alexandria, where his father died in 493/1100. At that point Ibn al-ʿArabī returned to al-Andalus where he became a scholar of great renown in Seville. He served as the judge of Seville for some time before retiring to devote himself to scholarship.[116]

Ibn al-ʿArabī wrote a work entitled Al-*ʿAwāṣim min al-qawāṣim* (*Preservation from Destruction*),[117] in which he presents a series of historical and theological disasters (*qāṣimah*, pl. *qawāṣim*) that befell the Islamic community and then presents how the community was preserved (*ʿāṣimah*, pl. *ʿawāṣim*) from them. He does this through refuting a particular heresy or giving different historical interpretations of an event. He states in his introduction that the disasters are disasters of deception and persuasion and the solutions come from what is rightly transmitted and discovered. Consequently, he blames *ḥadīth* transmitters for using correct accounts to come to false conclusions. Similarly, according to Ibn al-ʿArabī, historians "concoct [stories] to poison weak hearts which they push into people's heads to make them despise their forefathers and disregard religion."[118] Ibn al-ʿArabī criticizes al-Masʿūdī, al-Jāḥiẓ, and Ibn Qutayba's *Imāmah wa'l-siyāsah* as being full of lies that denigrate the

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[116] J Robson, "Ibn al-ʿArabī, Abū Bakr Muḥammad," *EI²*.
[117] Abū Bakr ibn al-ʿArabī, *Al-ʿAwāṣim min al-qawāṣim*, ed. ʿAmmār Ḥālbī (Cairo: Maktabat Dār al-Turāth, 1997).
[118] Ibid., 350.

Companions.[119] Ibn al-ʿArabī argues, however, "[Religion] is greater than that and they [the forefathers] are better than we."[120] His work is an effort to set the record straight by emphasizing the unity among the Companions. Despite his criticism of *ḥadīth* transmitters and historians, Ibn al-ʿArabī holds up the *ʿulamāʾ* as the ones who need to preserve religion by propagating the truth about the past.[121]

In his treatment of "*al-qāṣimah* of injustices falsely attributed to ʿUthmān" and his subsequent resolutions, Ibn al-ʿArabī focuses on the importance of the unity of the community modeled by the Companions of the Prophet. He presents a familiar list of thirteen accusations against ʿUthmān, which he labels the "stories of liars."[122] Ibn al-ʿArabī responds to these in twenty pages of text under the heading "*ʿĀsimah*" in which he includes many of the standard responses which defend ʿUthmān and the Companions.[123] Most accusations are rejected as based on false accounts and the *a priori* assumption that the Companions could not have done anything blameworthy.

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[119] Ibid., 353, 355. The editor notes, however, that it is certain Ibn Qutayba did not write *Imāmah wa'l-siyāsah* and therefore Ibn Qutayba is a trustworthy source. He says nothing about the *Imāmah*.
[120] Ibid., 349.
[121] This strong role for the *ʿulamāʾ* may also reflect the views of al-Ghazālī, with whom he studied. Like al-Ghazālī, he is critical of the *ʿulamāʾ* for failing to do their duty.
[122] Ibn al-ʿArabī, 281. These are that ʿUthmān 1) struck ʿAmmār and Ibn Masʿūd to make an example of them until ʿAmmār's intestines were torn open and Ibn Masʿūd's strength was broken; 2) "contrived" to gather the Qur'ān and its editions and to burn the Qur'ān (*muṣḥaf*); 3) exiled Abū Dharr and Abū al-Dardāʾ; 4) brought back al-Ḥakam after the Prophet had exiled him; 5) altered the order of prayer during travel; 6) gave Marwān a fifth (of the booty) of Africa; 7) elevated himself above the Prophet and diminished the *sunnah* of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar; 8) was not present at the Battle of Badr and fled from the Battle of Uḥud; 9) was absent from the oath of allegiance given to Muhammad at al-Riḍwān; 10) appointed al-Walīd b. ʿUqbah and he was licentious and also not of the "the men possessing lawful authority" (*ahl al-walayāt*); 11) did not kill all those involved in the murder of ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb; 12) appointed Muʿāwiyah and Marwān when they were not among the *ahl al-walayāt*; 13) and was ignorant of the letter found with his servant ordering Ibn Abī Sarḥ to kill those mentioned in it. It is noteworthy that defending Muʿāwiyah and Marwān's appointment is seen as a significant issue. Also note that Ibn al-ʿArabī never accuses ʿUthmān of writing the infamous letter, merely of being ignorant of it.
[123] Less common is his willingness to criticize earlier authorities. He begins by stating all the accusations are baseless in their *isnād, matn* whenever they accuse ʿUthmān of injustice or horrible deeds. Ibn al-ʿArabī, 281.

Those points that cannot be easily refuted, Ibn al-ʿArabī defers to the reliable *ʿulamāʾ* who always end up defending ʿUthmān.[124] For example, in response to the accusation that ʿUthmān lifted himself above the Prophet, Ibn al-ʿArabī states that there is no evidence of this from the *ʿulamāʾ* and that if ʿUthmān had done such a thing, he would have been censured by the Companions, but there is no reliable evidence of this.[125] As to the alterations ʿUthmān made in the prayer ritual, Ibn al-ʿArabī states that although the Companions differed on the subject, the *ʿulamāʾ* have all agreed it was acceptable.[126] Similarly, he admits "our *ʿulamāʾ*" agree that if the accusations against ʿUthmān regarding the battle of Badr and Uḥud were indeed true, his blood would have been lawful. But the stories are false or leave out key details.[127] Ibn al-ʿArabī refutes the accusation of the letter and then uses this incident as a transition to the events of the revolt and siege.[128]

In his narrative of the revolt and siege, Ibn al-ʿArabī defends the unity of the community and ʿUthmān's character. It was men from Basra, Kufa, and Egypt who were stirring up *fitnah*. Muʿāwiyah confronted them and accused them of "tearing apart the sanctity of the *ummah*" and behaving like those living in ignorance before Islam.[129] They had no legitimate basis for their complaints nor could they prove that the letter was written by ʿUthmān. In contrast to the dissidents' desire for *fitnah*, ʿUthmān refused to abandon the Prophet's community to its own devices. Ibn ʿUmar urged ʿUthmān not to remove the shirt (of authority) placed upon him by God. ʿUthmān called into his own defense the "sound *ḥadīth*" that whoever bought the well of Rūmah and enlarged the mosque would be in Paradise.[130] The significance of ʿUthmān's place in Paradise is reiterated again when Ibn al-ʿArabī asserts ʿUthmān died a believer, that Muhammad told ʿUthmān he would breakfast with him that day, and that he is a resident of Paradise because of his suffering. Finally, he describes ʿUthmān as a martyr.[131] Despite this designation, he does not develop the image of ʿUthmān's martyrdom in his description of the murder. Rather Ibn al-ʿArabī focuses on defending the behavior of the Companions.

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[124] He often refers to al-Bukhārī and Ibn Ḥanbal. He also says Mālik concluded it was lawful to give a fifth of the booty to one person. Ibid., 287.
[125] Ibid.
[126] Ibid., 288.
[127] And at the oath of Riḍwān, Muḥammad sent ʿUthmān to watch over Mecca, which was why he was not present. And Muḥammad sent him with the solemn oath, placing his hand on ʿUthmān's. Rather than ʿUthmān missing the oath of allegiance, he was honored with a personal one. Ibid.
[128] He points out it was never proven that the man with the letter was ʿUthmān's servant. ʿUthmān denied it and demanded two witnesses against him which were never produced. Ibid., 291.
[129] Ibid., 292. Neither Ibn al-ʿArabī nor any of the other Andalusian writers, except Ibn Abī Bakr, mention the heretical Sabāʾiyyah movement.

Ibn al-ʿArabi defends the Companions by showing their support for ʿUthmān and arguing that ʿUthmān chose to surrender himself to God. He gives several accounts beginning with "it is said" or "it is written," which describe various Companions either opposing or abandoning ʿUthmān. But according to Ibn al-ʿArabī, these accounts about the Companions were "manufactured to make the hearts of the Muslims boil with anger against their forefathers in the past and the *Rāshidūn* Caliphate."[132] He insists none of the Companions were among those who attacked ʿUthmān; if ʿUthmān only had asked for help, 1,000-4,000 or 20,000 or more would have come to his aid, "but he surrendered himself to the catastrophe."[133] Ibn al-ʿArabī concludes, therefore, that if we "strain out of the matter of ʿUthmān all that was unjustly and falsely attributed to him, it will be seen that ʿUthmān was killed unjustly and without excuse."[134] According to Ibn al-ʿArabī, the Companions were innocent of ʿUthmān's blood because ʿUthmān surrendered himself to God's will and forced them to "surrender to his view of Islam."[135] This is Ibn al-ʿArabī's resolution of the crisis of false accusations about ʿUthmān. He concludes by stating, "After what was fated had come to pass, the caliphate was wanting and the oath of allegiance to ʿAlī could not patch the tear [in the fabric]."[136] The subsequent *qawāṣim* confirm this fact as Ibn al-ʿArabī traces the consequences of the revolt against ʿUthmān.

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[130] Ibid., 294. The narrative refers simply to the sound *ḥadīth* and the well and mosque, leaving it to the reader to draw the connection between ʿUthmān's behavior and the Prophet's words on the subject.
[131] Ibid., 298.
[132] Ibid. For example, earlier he defended ʿUthmān's appointment of al-Walīd and Marwān by pointing out they were honored Companions and therefore could not have done anything blameworthy. Ibid., 286.

Ibn al-ʿArabī's first priority continues to be defending the Companions and the unity of the community.[137] He defends the oath of allegiance given to ʿAlī as binding. In his treatment of the "crisis" of the "war" between the people of Syria and Iraq, between those who gave the oath of allegiance to ʿAlī and those demanding retribution for ʿUthmān's murder, Ibn al-ʿArabī admits that both sides had their perspective and their rights, but ʿAlī's were greater.[138] Thus he does not explicitly condemn Muʿāwiyah's refusal to support ʿAlī's caliphate in the name of vengeance for ʿUthmān, but he does point out Muʿāwiyah's position was weaker because he threatened the unity of the community.[139] In direct contrast to the *Imāmah*, Ibn al-ʿArabī holds up the early community and the Companions over Muʿāwiyah and the unique destiny of al-Andalus. His emphasis on unity also differs from Ibn Ḥazm's emphasis on moral superiority. However, like Ibn Ḥazm, he rejects any conflict based on a desire for political power as a reversion to the ignorance and the tribal loyalties that dominated before Islam.[140]

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[133] Ibid., 297. He goes on to add that the *ʿulamā'* disagree among themselves about whether ʿUthmān should have asked for assistance or accepted his "hand" (fate). However, based on ʿUthmān's admission that he surrendered to usurpers who conspired against him in response to the prophetic *ḥadīth* that he would only breakfast with Muḥammad after a *fitnah*, Ibn al-ʿArabī supports ʿUthmān's course of action.

[134] Ibid., 298.

[135] Ibid.

[136] Ibid., 299.

[137] He discusses the *qāṣimah* of the Banū Umayyah inciting for ʿUthmān's blood, which is basically his treatment of the Battle of the Camel, although in very vague terms, never using this title. He is hard pressed to deny the divisions among the Companions. His main argument is that many of the accounts about this event are false, without reliable transmission or authentification. There are false reports, false *ḥadīths*, and false witnesses; people talk about things they know nothing about. Ibn al-ʿArabī goes on to say that there is no faith in the accounts and that they have been infiltrated and passed on by those who want to betray Islam. Ibid., 302-305.

In any conflict Ibn al-ʿArabī sides with those who represent a continuation and preservation of the unity of the community. Thus he quotes Qurʾān 49:9-10 in criticism of both Muʿāwiyah and ʿAlī for having allowed themselves to fall into a bloody power struggle.[141] Similarly, when complaints were launched against al-Yazīd b. Muʿāwiyah, Ibn al-ʿArabī does not defend his character, but rather reiterates the fact that Muḥammad established a unified community and that it was wrong to shed the blood of a brother.[142] Consequently, Ibn al-ʿArabī is unsympathetic towards the cause of al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī or his brutal death at Karbala; according to Ibn al-ʿArabī al-Ḥusayn was in the wrong for threatening the unity of the community.[143] But wherever possible, Ibn al-ʿArabī denies that there were conflicts between the Companions. He questions the reliability of accounts about the Battle of the Camel and the Battle of Siffīn.[144] Ibn al-ʿArabī's exhortation to unity leads him inexorably to a refutation of Shīʿism.

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[138] Ibid., 305.

[139] Most notable of these are that neither ʿAlī, nor any of the other Companions, could have possibly been involved in ʿUthmān's murder. Second, what happened to ʿUthmān was not their fault because "ʿUthmān surrendered himself." Furthermore, it was impossible to seek retribution without threatening the unity of the community. Nor could someone step down or be forced to step down after the *bayʿa*. Ibid., 302-312.

[140] Indeed he sums up all the trials he has considered as a reversion to ignorance and tribalism. Ibid., 350.

[141] Ibid., 313. The verse is as follows: "If two groups of believers come to fight one another, promote peace between them. Then if one of them turns aggressive against the other, fight against the aggressive party until it returns to God's authority. If it does so, make peace among them equitably and be impartial. Verily God loves those who are just. The faithful are surely brothers; so restore friendship among your brothers, and fear God that you may be favoured."

Ibn al-ʿArabī treats as one of the "crises" of the community the view that the caliphate should have gone to ʿAlī from the very beginning. According to Ibn al-ʿArabī, the original view of the "*Imāmiyyah,*" that ʿAlī should have been caliph after Muḥammad, had, in five hundred years, developed into the view of the *Rāfiḍah*, who, like Christians and Jews, give undue status to the companions of Moses and Jesus.[145] He repeats Ibn Ḥazm's point that when Muḥammad appointed ʿAli over Medina and compared this with Moses appointing Aaron it was not a permanent designation. Ibn al-ʿArabī applies the additional logic that everyone knows Aaron died before Moses so clearly the designation could not have signified succession.[146] Ibn al-ʿArabī's critique of the *Rawāfiḍ* broadens to include a refutation of special status claimed for any individual or group. In this his position is consistent with his patrons, the Almoravids, who had no prior claims to legitimacy.

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[142] Ibid., 335. He praises Ibn ʿUmar as a notable Companion who gave al-Yazīd the oath of allegiance.
[143] Ibid., 337; Fierro, "La Religión," 471.
[144] Ibid., 308-310. He believes a corrective to these (unnamed) books are the accounts by Khalīfah b. Khayyāṭ (d. 240/854) and al-Dārqiṭanī (d. 385/995). The only extant manuscript copy of Ibn Khayyāṭ's *Ta'rīkh* is from Morocco and was copied in al-Andalus in 1084.
[145] According to Ibn al-ʿArabī, the *Imāmiyyah* believe Muḥammad appointed ʿAlī to be his successor just as Moses appointed Aaron, but Abū Bakr usurped authority and then appointed ʿUmar. ʿUmar tried to rectify the situation by appointing a *shūrā*, but this was thwarted by the machinations of Ibn ʿAwf and ʿUthmān was appointed. (Note how ʿUmar is exempted from Shīʿite criticism.) Upon ʿUthmān's death the caliphate came to ʿAlī as it rightfully should, but then Muʿāwiyah and the Syrians refused to recognize his caliphate. And these were, therefore, not merely "corrupters" of religion, but "unbelievers." Ibid., 313.

To claim special status for any individual, according to Ibn al-ʿArabī, is contrary to Islam and verging on idolatry. He quotes the Qur'anic verse:

> God has promised to make those of you who believe and do the right, leaders in the land, as He had made those before them, and will establish their faith which He has chosen for them and change their fear into security. They will worship Me and not associate any one with Me. But those who disbelieve after this will be reprobates.[147]

The right to lead the community is based on right belief and right actions, and when this happens, the result is security in the land. Ibn al-ʿArabī declares this to be a "sound and promised truth," but one that had unfortunately "died out" so that now there is "no caliph, nor consolidation, nor faith, nor life, except in injustice, transgression, enmity, confusion, wintery words, and vengeance."[148] The weakness and distance of the caliph, combined with the equality of all believers and the importance of unity, leads Ibn al-ʿArabī to conclude the *ʿulamā'* are now responsible for maintaining unity and upholding religion.

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[146] Ibid., 314. Ibn al-ʿArabī's linkage between Shīʿism and Christianity as well may also reflect the renewed conflict with the Christians in the north.

[147] Q 24:55.

[148] Ibn al-ʿArabī, 314. After this Qur'anic promise and rhetorical flourish, Ibn al-ʿArabī develops a more historically grounded rebuttal to the *Rawāfiḍ*. He tells of Muḥammad's sickness and that Muḥammad did not appoint a successor. In fact if anyone was given special status it was the first three caliphs when Muḥammad described them as "the friend and the two martyrs." Ibn al-ʿArabī wants to defend Abū Bakr's right to the caliphate without encouraging the glorification of individuals. Thus he cites first the Qur'anic verse which tells how Abū Bakr was with Muḥammad in the cave when they fled Mecca (Q 9:40), and then the *ḥadīth* in which Muḥammad became angry when any attempts were made to evaluate or compare the Companions. Ibid., 315-6. This *ḥadīth* is also in Ibn ʿAsākir.

Ibn al-ʿArabī quotes again Qurʾān 24:55 stating "God has promised to make those of you who believe and do the right, leaders in the land," and then he asks: "If this promise was not accomplished in the caliphate then who will carry it out? And if it is not among them then among whom?"[149] He then presents a case for this role being taken over by the *ʿulamāʾ*. He states that currently no one person has special status or superior virtue, so leadership may take a different form based on those who can now accomplish the promises of God, defend the territory of Islam, and carry out Islamic government. He points out it is currently the *ʿulamāʾ* who support God, institute *sharīʿah*, advise the servants of God, guide the leader to the right path, and preserve religion. He divides the *ʿulamāʾ* into four categories: those who preserve the accounts of the Prophet; those who study the roots of law and defend religion and keep it on the right path; those who maintain the foundations of religious observances and distinguish between what is permissible and forbidden; and those who devote themselves exclusively to service, dedicate themselves to religious duties, and keep themselves away from the world. He concludes: "They in the end have the essence of kings in the world."[150] His defense for the prominence of the *ʿulamāʾ* is accompanied by an assertion of the sufficiency of God, His Prophet, and his faithful followers.[151] By rejecting the special claims of both the caliphs and the *ahl al-bayt*, Ibn al-ʿArabī provides a foundation for the legitimacy of the Almoravids.

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[149] Ibid., 318.
[150] Ibid., 318-9.
[151] Ibid., 350. He cites Qurʾān 8:63 in which God says: "It is He who has strengthened you with His help and with believers whose hearts he cemented with love. You could never have united their hearts even if you had spent whatever (wealth) is in the earth; but God united them with love for He is all-mighty and all wise. God is sufficient for you, O Prophet, and the faithful who follow you."

Many aspects of Ibn al-ʿArabī's narrative reflect his contemporary milieu. The prominent place he gives to the *ʿulamāʾ* was completely consistent with the arrangement between the Andalusian *ʿulamāʾ* and the Almoravids.[152] Similarly his emphasis on the unity of the community and the need to return to the ideal model of the Companions was a part of the reform program of the Almoravids. His praise of the Companions and the early community, while he says virtually nothing about the caliphate or Muʿāwiyah, also shows how the Almoravids' legitimacy was not based on Andalusian history. Even though the Almoravids sought recognition from the ʿAbbāsid caliph, their legitimacy was found first and foremost in their own efforts to establish Islamic government, restore unity, and combat heretics and Christians.[153]

The outlook of Ibn al-ʿArabī and the Almoravids paralleled developments in the east as well. Ibn al-ʿArabī's studies in the east corresponded with what George Makdisi has termed the "Sunni revival."[154] Moreover, Ibn al-ʿArabī was studying in Egypt when Jerusalem fell to the Crusaders. His writings and the policies of the Almoravids are similar to the views of the ʿAbbasid vizier, Ibn Hubayra, and the policies of Nūr al-Dīn. Nūr al-Dīn was hailed for his efforts not only to restore the military unity and might of the Muslims in order to resist the Christians, but to restore Islamic government generally. He endowed numerous mosques and schools, established the house of justice in Damascus, and sought the advice and support of the *ʿulamāʾ*, many of whom held prominent positions in his entourage, including Ibn ʿAsākir. Like Ibn ʿAsākir, Ibn al-ʿArabī is keen to present an idealized portrayal of the early community. However, he also foreshadows future developments in the literature as he moves away from the *ḥadīth*-based biographies of Ibn ʿAsakir and Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr to confront and refute controversial accounts.

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[152] Under the Party-Kings, the *ʿulamāʾ* begrudgingly supported their local amīrs because they had no power base and no alternative. When one was provided in the form of the Almoravids they took it. M'Hammad Benaboud, "Socio-Political Role of Andalusian Ulama During 5th/11th Century," *Islamic Studies* 23:2 (1984): 103-141.

[153] Along these lines, however, it is noteworthy that in his emphasis on unity, Ibn al-ʿArabī says very little about justice.

[154] Makdisi, "Sunnī Revival." Henri Laoust also notes the parallel Sunnī revivals in the east and west. *Les Schismes*, 200-222.

Ibn al-ʿArabī and the *ʿulamāʾ* supported the Almoravids with the understanding that their own position in turn would be strengthened.[155] At first the arrangement worked well, but eventually the Almoravids suffered under the same demands of government that compromised the Party-Kings.[156] The pressure of continual fighting against the Christians forced them to institute extra-Qurʾanic taxes. Internal divisions and weaknesses encouraged individual Almoravid generals to collude with Christian rulers in order to ensure their own survival.[157] As the Almoravid government came to resemble that of their predecessors, they too fell victim to a new Islamic reformist movement rising out of North Africa, the Almohads. The Almohads came with renewed emphasis on jihād and accused the Almoravids of a variety of corruptions and heresies.[158]

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[155] Ibn al-ʿArabī was only one of a number of jurists whose writings reveal a desire to renovate and strengthen Mālikī Islam in the Almoravid period. Fierro, "Derecho, Teología y Heterodoxia," in *El Retroceso Territorial de al-Andalus: Almorávides y Almohades Siglos XI al XIII*, ed. María Jesús Viguera Molins (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, S.A., 1997), 459.

[156] And, one could argue, undermined ʿUthmān's authority as well.

[157] This too is reminiscent of the fate of the Ayyūbids who co-existed with the Crusaders as much as they combated them.

[158] Among these, was the charge of anthropomorphism. The Almohads emphasized the oneness of God (*tawḥīd*) from which they derive their name in Arabic, *al-Muwaḥḥidūn*. M. Shatzmiller, "Al-Muwaḥḥidūn," *EI²*.

THE ALMOHADS (567-629/1171-1232)

Although the Almohads marked a return to some of the founding ideas of the Almoravids, such as Islamic renewal and jihād against the Christians, their religious and political ideology was very different. Like the Almoravids, the movement began in North Africa, inspired by the religious teaching and political leadership of Ibn Tūmart (d. 524/1130). But Ibn Tūmart claimed to be the *Mahdī* who would unveil knowledge that had become progressively hidden since the Prophet's death.[159] According to Maribel Fierro, "Whereas the Almoravids presented themselves as guarantors of continuity with former political allegiances (acknowledgement of the ʿAbbasid caliphate) and of traditional Mālikism, the Almohads stood for revolution."[160] However, she also characterizes them as a "doctrine en evolucion."[161]

Modern scholarship has traced not only Ashʿarite, but Khārijite, Shīʿite and philosophical influences in the thought of Ibn Tūmart.[162] Ibn Tūmart emphasized the importance of reason in coming to religious knowledge and legal decisions.[163] Based on Ibn Tūmart's claim to be the *Mahdī* and the importance of individual reason and knowledge, his successors took the title of caliph and asserted their right to define Islamic law and practice. Although the term *mahdī* contains a range of doctrinal understandings, "in Ibn Tūmart's case this designation has been understood as approaching Shīʿism, as rivaling Prophetic status, or as an identification with the eschatological *Mahdī* who would restore justice on earth at the end of time."[164]

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[159] Fierro, "The Legal Policies of the Almohad Caliphs and Ibn Rushd's *Bidāyat al-mujtahid*," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 10:3 (1999): 229.
[160] Ibid., 227.
[161] Fierro, "Derecho, Teologica y Heterodoxia," 445.
[162] Ibid., 443.
[163] Fierro, "The Legal Policies of the Almohad Caliphs," 226-248.

Many of the Almohad policies were designed to distinguish them from the Almoravids. Whereas the strict Mālikism of the Almoravids had led to the burning of books by al-Ghazālī, the Almohads circulated an apocryphal story that Ibn Tūmart had studied with him.[165] In contrast to the glorification of the Companions seen in Ibn al-ʿArabī, Ibn Tūmart and his successors venerated the family of the Prophet. Under the Almohads there is an increase in poetry and polemic over the murder of al-Ḥusayn.[166] Claiming authority resided in the family of the Prophet was clearly designed to undermine the Almoravids' legitimacy based on communal unity and ʿAbbāsid support.[167] But it is probably not a coincidence that the year the Almohads entered al-Andalus, 567/1171, was the same year Saladin abolished the Fāṭimid Caliphate in Cairo removing the need for or ability of Andalusian rulers to legitimate themselves in opposition to the Fāṭimds, even as it reduced the perceived threat of Shīʿism. The adoption of Shīʿite views in the west parallels the rapprochement between Sunnī and Shīʿite Islam taking place at the same time in the east.[168]

Another parallel between east and west, and one point of continuity between the Almoravids and the Almohads, was the renewed interest in the early Islamic conquests and early Islamic historical sources.[169] Dominique Urvoy has argued that jihād did not play as large a part in Andalusian political legitimacy or intellectual ethos as one would expect for a frontier zone.[170] She notes, however, that an exception to this is the Almoravid and Almohad era from the eleventh to the mid thirteenth centuries.[171] As Nūr al-Dīn and Saladin called upon the memory of early Islamic victories to rally support in their struggle against the Crusaders, the Muslim rulers of al-Andalus needed to fan the flame of jihād against the Christians of the north. Two twelfth century treatises on the early Islamic conquests help to illustrate historical and historiographical developments during the Almohad period.

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[164] Fierro, "The Legal Policies of the Almohad Caliphs," 230.
[165] Fierro, "Almorávides y Almohades en al-Andalus," 443.
[166] Fierro, "Derecho, Teologia y Heterodoxia," 470-1.
[167] Ibid.
[168] See previous chapter.

ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muhammad b. ʿAbdallāh Ibn Ḥubaysh (504-584/1110-1188)[172] and his student, Abū al-Rabiʿa Sulaymān b. Mūsā al-Kalāʿī al-Andalusī (565-634/1170-1236),[173] each wrote a work on the conquests of the Prophet and the first three caliphs.[174] Although the designation of only the first three caliphs suggests sectarian bias, in both cases it appears to be based primarily on the fact that most of the conquests did take place during the reign of the first three caliphs. Both authors focus on the conquests while largely ignoring issues that would have later religio-political significance. In addition to this relative indifference to Sunnī-Shīᶜite tensions, Ibn Ḥubaysh is noteworthy for his use of early Islamic sources, such as the *Kitāb al-riddah* of Sayf b. ᶜUmar and al-Wāqidī, and what has been identified as the *Futūḥ al-Sham* of al-ᶜAzdī, as well as al-Ṭabarī's *History.*[175] In *Al-Iktifāʾ*, al-Kalāᶜī relies on very early sources no longer extant, such as Ibn al-ᶜUqbah and Ibn Isḥāq, as well as al-Wāqidī and Ibn Ḥubaysh. Ibn Ḥubaysh and al-Kalāᶜī reflect the ongoing parallels with eastern historiographical developments as well as how these were manifest in unique ways based on the internal fluctuations of Andalusian politics. The final fluctuation considered here is the shift from their emphasis on jihād and indifference towards ᶜUthmān to Ibn Abī Bakr's solitary focus on ᶜUthmān's martyrdom. Ibn Abī Bakr's treatise can be seen as a Naṣrid rebuttal to the Almohads as well a culmination of long-term trends in Andalusian historiography.

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[169] Ibn al-ʿArabī also encouraged local rulers to engage in jihād against the Christians. Fierro, "Almorávides y Almohades en al-Andalus," 440.

[170] Dominique Urvoy, *Pensees d'al-Andalus: La vie intellectuelle a Cordoue et Seville au temps des empires berberes (fin XI^{e} siècle-début XIII^{e} siècle* (Paris: Presses Universitaires du Mirail, 1992), 14.

[171] This is not to say there was no previous interest, but it increased significantly in the Almoravid and Almohad periods. In her article, "New Data on an Old Manuscript," Ella Landau-Tasseron has shown that the Andalusian Abū ʿUmar al-Talamankī (d. 429/1037) made a copy of al-Azdī's *Futūḥ al-Sham* (376). Landau-Tasseron also notes that sometimes Talamankī's version reveals "a specific andalusian orientation" in which references to the enemy as merely "people" or "the Persians" has been changed to "the Byzantines" suggesting a parallel with the contemporary Christian threat in al-Andalus (369).

[172] Ibn Ḥubaysh grew up in Almería, a major port and trading city known for its embroidery and brocade. It fell to the Christians in 542/1147 only to be regained by the Muslims ten years later. He distinguished himself in Qur'ān recitation and *ḥadīth* transmission, and other arts. After the Muslims lost al-Muriyya, he emigrated to Murcia and was appointed a *qāḍī* there. Ibn Hubaysh wrote his *Ghazawāt* on the request of Yusuf b. ʿAbd al-Mu'min (d. 580/1184) the second caliph of the Almohad state in the Maghrib. Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Ghazawāt Ibn Ḥubaysh*, ed. Suhayl Zakkār (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1992), 9.

[173] Al-Kalāʿī was born outside Valencia, traveled and studied throughout al-Andalus and the Maghrib, before being appointed preacher at the Friday mosque in Valencia. He was well known for his expertise in *ḥadīth* and *kataba*. He died in the siege of Valencia in 634/1236. Al-Nabāhī, *Al-Marqabah*, 152.

THE NAṢRIDS (632- 897/1235-1492)

As with the many other ideological shifts discussed thus far, the contrast between al-Kalāᶜī and Ibn Ḥubaysh and Ibn Abī Bakr is placed within the context of

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[174] Ibn Ḥubaysh, *Kitāb al-ghazawāt al-ḍāminah al-kāmilah wa'l-futūḥ al-jāmiʿah al-ḥāfilah al-kāʾinah fī Uyyām al-khulafāʾ al-awal al-thalāthah* (published as *Ghazawāt Ibn Ḥubaysh*) and al-Kalāᶜī, *Al-Iktifāʾ fī maghāzī rasūl allāh wa'l-thalāthah al-khulafāʾ*, ed. Muṣṭafā ʿAbd al-Wāṣur (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī. 1970).

[175] Ella Landau-Tasseron notes that whenever Ibn Ḥubaysh uses al-Azdī, he mentions the name of the book rather than the author. She suggests that this is possibly because he was confused by the presence of two *Futūḥ al-Shams* – one by pseudo al-Wāqidī and one by al-Azdī. "New Data," 376.

Naṣrid rule in al-Andalus. The Almohads, like the Almoravids before them, eventually succumbed to internal divisions which weakened their position vis-à-vis the Christians and the North Africans. "In 629/1232, after the Almohads had withdrawn from the Iberian Peninsula, Muḥammad b. Yūsuf b. Naṣr (Muḥammad I) rebelled against Ibn Hūd, governor of al-Andalus, and was proclaimed *amīr* in Arjona (Jaen), his home town. In 634/1237 he entered Granada and made it the capital of the Naṣrid kingdom."[176] Naṣrid power extended over what are currently the provinces of Granada, Málaga, and Almeria until its defeat at the hands of the Christians in 897/1492, marking the end of Islamic rule in the Iberian Peninsula.

When the Naṣrids came to power they waged a campaign of "de-almohadization."[177] In this light Ibn Abī Bakr's treatise could be seen as a response to the Almohad veneration of the martyrdom of al-Ḥusayn.[178] He does not belittle al-Ḥusayn's martyrdom, rather he claims ʿUthmān's is of equal merit and significance. Ibn Abī Bakr's lack of concern for the conquests during ʿUthmān's caliphate also illustrates the shift from the Almohads' emphasis on jihād against the Christians and the Naṣrids' struggle to simply survive. Similarly he reverts back to many of the ideas put forward by Ibn al-ʿArabī in terms of the virtues of the Companions and the unity of the community.[179] Like Ibn al-ʿArabī, one of Ibn Abī Bakr's primary concerns is praising the "honorable forefathers," or Companions of the Prophet, and criticizing those who do not. Both authors blame the *Rawāfiḍ* for denigrating the Companions and dividing the community.[180] Although Ibn Abī Bakr relies heavily on al-Jāḥiẓ and Ibn al-ʿArabī criticizes al-Jāḥiẓ, Ibn Abī Bakr relies more heavily on Sayf b. ʿUmar, whose description of the virtuous Companions and unified early Community would have met with Ibn al-ʿArabī's approval. The more prominent role of the *ʿulamāʾ* and concern with unity in Ibn al-ʿArabī's narrative reflects their different historical milieus.

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[176] Calero Secall, "Rulers and Qāḍīs," 236.

[177] Fierro, "The Legal Policies of the Almohad Caliphs," 233

[178] *Al-Tamhīd wa'l-bayān* falls within the period of Naṣrid formation and consolidation. Maribel Calero Secall divides Naṣrid rule into four periods: formation and consolidation (629-708/1232-1309); internal crisis, dynastic change, and external pressure to gain control of the Strait of Gibraltar (708-733 /1309-1333); political, economic, and cultural splendor (733-793/1333-1391); and decline and instability (793-897/1391-1492). Calero Secall, "Rulers and Qāḍīs," 236-7.

Ibn al-ʿArabī was writing when the *ʿulamāʾ* played a key role in legitimizing the Almoravids, whereas the Naṣrids exerted much greater control over legal appointments and procedures.[181] Maribel Calero Secall discusses at length the close relationship between the judges (*qāḍīs*) and the Naṣrid sulṭāns and the very limited authority and stability of the former vis-à-vis the latter. She states:

> The *qāḍī al-jamāʿa*[182] in Granada occupied his office by designation of the king. However, unlike the chief judges at other times and places in the Muslim world, he did not have the legal capacity to appoint other judges within the kingdom. At most, and through his proximity to the ruler, the judge might recommend appointments. . . The relative instability of the

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[179] That Ibn al-ʿArabī divides his narrative into chapters and carries on a debate with the sources one hundred years before we see a similar style in Abī'l-Ḥadīd and Muḥibb al-Dīn calls for further research on literary trends. See Gary Leiser's, "The Restoration of Sunnism in Egypt" for more on the influence of Andalusian scholars on eastern centers of learning.

[180] Ibn al-ʿArabī also blames the *ʿulamāʾ*.

[181] Recall that the Andalusian *ʿulamāʾ* had invited the Almoravids to come and overthrow the weak and corrupt Party-Kings. Once in al-Andalus, the Almoravids continued to rely on the *ʿulamāʾ* to establish their legitimacy internally though the implementation of *sharīʿah* and externally by seeking recognition of their authority from the ʿAbbāsid Caliph. The Almoravids also legitimated themselves by claiming to unify the Andalusian Muslims against the Christians.

[182] Title for "chief *qāḍī*" in al-Andalus.

> judge's role was linked to political factors. During the long reigns, particularly those of Muḥammad I, Yūsuf I, and Muḥammad V, there were numerous changes in the legal organization, and chief *qāḍīs* were appointed and replaced frequently, according to the whims of the sultan.[183]

Despite the very precarious position of judges in the Naṣrid period, Ibn Abī Bakr was appointed chief *qāḍī* in Granada by Muḥammad IV and confirmed in the position by Yūsuf I.[184] In light of the Muslims' very precarious position on the edge of the Iberian Peninsula, it is not surprising that Ibn Abī Bakr believed in the importance of supporting the ruler.[185]

In addition to the unique situation of the Naṣrids, Ibn Abī Bakr's text can also be placed within larger trends in Andalusian historiography. His more rigorous use of *isnāds*, *ḥadīths*, and early Islamic sources reflect a gradual development in Andalusian historiography from the days of Ibn Ḥabīb. And as in Ibn Ḥazm and Ibn al-ʿArabī, he too draws parallels between the heresies of the *Rawāfiḍ* and the Jews, a common characteristic of Andalusian narratives of ʿUthmān.[186] The way Ibn Abī

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[183] Calero Secall, "Rulers and Qāḍīs," 238.

[184] Ibn al-Khaṭīb, *Historia de los Reyes de la Alhambra (el resplandor de la luna llena: al-Lamḥa al-badriyya)*, ed. and trans. by Emilio Molina López and José M.a Casciaro Ramírez (Granada: Biblioteca Chronica Nova de estudios Históricos, University of Granada, 1998), 103,114.

[185] But Ibn Abī Bakr also came to Granada when he was forced to leave his post in Málaga because "his firmness and strictness caused indignation amongst the most important people, who directed envious criticisms against him and held him accountable for certain things." Al-Nabāhī, *Al-Marqabah*, 178.

[186] He argues the *Rawāfiḍ* resemble the Jews in several ways. "The Jews say the perfection of kingship is in David and the *Rawāfiḍ* say the perfection of the amīr is in ʿAlī. The Jews say there is no jihād until the messiah comes descending from the sky and the *Rawāfiḍ* say there is no jihād until the *Mahdī* comes. The Jews delay the evening prayers until the stars have come out and likewise the dissenters claim that Muḥammad delayed the evening prayers until the stars were connected. The Jews talk foolishly about the Torah and the *Rawāfiḍ* talk foolishly about the Qur'ān. The Jews regard as permissible the blood of a Muslim and so do the *Rawāfiḍ*. The Jews declare the day of Rosh Hoshana sacred and the *Rawāfiḍ* declare the day of ʿAshūr sacred. Neither the Jews nor the *Rawāfiḍ* treat their women with respect. The Jews deny that Muḥammad is the seal of the Prophets and the *Rawāfiḍ* believe that ʿAlī was the final prophet." Ibn Abī Bakr, ms., 233-4. In a final comparison, however, he says the Jews and Christians are better than the *Rawāfiḍ* because they originate from the companions of Moses and Jesus, whereas the *Rawāfiḍ* do not originate from Muḥammad's Companions. Ibid. 235.

Bakr divides his narrative into chapters and wages a debate with the sources may also reflect the influence of Ibn al-ʿArabī rather than Muḥibb al-Dīn. It is not necessary, however, to draw a firm distinction between eastern and western influences. As we have seen, Andalusian historiography, although unique, mirrored many developments in the east.

In addition to representing a culmination of internal historiographic trends, Ibn Abī Bakr might also reflect the meeting of parallel developments in east and west. His treatise may have met the ideological needs of the Naṣrids and their efforts to legitimize themselves over and against the Almohads, or it may reflect the Sunnī resurgence that took place under the Mamlūks after the Mongol invasions. It is important to remember that despite the vast expanse of the medieval Islamic world, it was still one community. The Crusades in Syria coincided with the *Reconquista* in Spain. The Mongol invasions and fall of the ʿAbbāsids came only shortly after the Islamic presence in Spain was pushed back to a tiny enclave on the south-eastern coast. The initial response in the late seventh/thirteenth century appears to have been primarily in the form of religious consolidation. But the political implications were soon to follow.

Conclusion

Thus far the narrative of ʿUthmān in the post-Ṭabarī period has traced the fluctuations in Sunnī-Shīʿite tensions on the one hand, and the fairly stable relations between the sulṭāns and the caliphs and the *ʿulamāʾ* and the rulers on the other – from one end of the Islamic world to the other. The *ʿulamāʾ* supported the rulers in order to achieve unity and security. It was believed justice was best achieved within this framework, rather than replacing a ruler with a more just one. The ideological hold of the ʿAbbāsid caliph, the military might of the local sulṭān, and the absence of viable alternatives left little room to maneuver.[187] However, in the Mamlūk period (648-922/1250-1517) the growing influence and self-awareness of the *ʿulamāʾ*, combined with an obsolete caliphate and a slave-soldier sultanate, encouraged a renewed debate over the basis of religious and political authority and the appeals to unity and justice. These issues replace the Sunnī-Shīʿite tension that dominated the narrative of ʿUthmān for centuries. Rather than focusing on internal divisions, the crisis of leadership and the collapse of previously secure borders appear to have caused a renewed interest in the Islamic community as a whole, its founding principles, and its founding narratives.

The religio-political debates of the Mamlūk period are reminiscent of those conducted in the third/ninth century and also take place overwhelmingly within the historical discourse. In fact the third/ninth and eighth/fourteenth centuries are unique for the number of universal chronicles they produced. Considering Fred Donner's point that "History is always written because it is deemed useful in some way,"[188] this parallel level in scholarly production and historical concentration may reflect a similar evaluation, or re-evaluation, of Islamic principles, as the rulers and scholars of both periods sought to find their bearings after a religio-political revolution. I consider the implications of this further in the following chapter.

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[187] The Andalusian *ʿulamāʾ*'s cooperation in overthrowing the Party-Kings was somewhat unique since there was a viable alternative, and the current disunity and weakness was threatening the very existence of the community. Although restoration of Islamic government, primarily in the form of abolishing extra-Qurʾanic taxes was a key part of the Almoravids' program, in the writings of Ibn al-ʿArabī, it was unity and defense more than justice that were of key concern. His lack of defense for the caliphate and emphasis on the role of the *ʿulamāʾ* reflects his own originality as well as the unique position of al-Andalus.

[188] Donner, *Narratives*, 117.

> In addition to this one, other traditions are related which, if they are sound, are irrefutable. Even if they are later inventions, they are nevertheless an indication in this matter concerning which dispute has raged and controversy has been prolonged.[1]

CHAPTER FIVE – REJUVENATION:
ʿUTHMĀN & THE BAHRĪ MAMLŪKS

Introduction

The Mamlūk historian Taqī'l-Dīn al-Maqrīzī (766-854/1364-1442) made the above observation in his treatise *Kitāb al-nizāʿ wa'l-takhāṣum fīmā bayn Banī Umayyaah wa-Banī Hāshim* ("Book of Contention and Strife Concerning the Relations between the Banū Umayyah and the Banū Hāshim"). The remark displays Maqrīzī's astuteness as a historian and affirms the contention of this study that the controversies of the early Islamic period continued to be debated and discussed well into the ninth/fifteenth century.[2] The other contention of this study, however, has been that in the eighth/fourteenth century in particular debates over tensions stemming from the revolt against ʿUthmān – especially between religious and political authority and principles of unity and justice -- were re-invigorated. In contrast Sunnī-Shīʿite tensions, which had dominated the post-Ṭabarī discourse, became less acute, merely one of many challenges facing the rulers and the *ʿulamāʾ* as they sought to renegotiate the basis and boundaries of political authority. New historical circumstances and the internal momentum of the historical discourse produced in the eighth/fourteenth century a re-evaluation of the third/ninth century debates surrounding the consequences of the first *fitnah*.

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[1] Taqī'l-Dīn al-Maqrīzī, "Book of Contention and Strife Concerning the Relations between the Banū Umayya and the Banū Hāshim," trans., intro., and commentary by C. E. Bosworth, *Journal of Semitic Studies* Monograph No. 3 (Manchester: University of Manchester, 1980), 75.

[2] Al-Maqrīzī states he is writing this work because of the time he has spent perplexed over the issues and the many conversations he has had with other scholars. Ibid., 69.

Thus far modern scholars have noted the rise of historical awareness and interest in the Mamlūk period (648-922/1250-1517), but have attributed this to a continuation of earlier trends or to an aspect of the Mamlūk era generally. One reason scholars have not noted the uniqueness of the fourteenth century is that they disregard the early portions of universal chronicles and focus on the contemporary material.[3] Even Tarif Khalidi, who addresses the renewed interest in early Islamic history and the concomitant rise in the production of universal chronicles, focuses on the latter portions of these histories and how the present was interpreted in light of the past – without addressing the opposite possibility. Nor does he see the fourteenth century as unique, rather it was the culmination of "siyasa-oriented historiography" dating back to the fifth/eleventh century, in which the growing bureaucratization of the state and the government's desire to control knowledge also encouraged the production of voluminous universal chronicles.[4] Although there is certainly evidence of continuity and growth, his model, I would argue, does not adequately explain the significantly greater number of universal chronicles in the eighth/fourteenth century in comparison to the seventh/thirteenth or ninth/fifteenth century.

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[3] For example, al-Dhahabī's *Ta'rīkh al-Islām* has been described as "very short" for the first three centuries, "giving only the gist of the matter and being but a concise compendium of al-Ṭabarī's chronicle." M. Bencheneb and J. de Somogyi, "Al-Dhahabī," *EI*^{2}. M. Talbi notes that Ibn Khaldūn's *Kitab al-ʿibar* has received much less interest than his *Muqaddimah*, but that it is a good source for information on the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and the Islamic West. M. Talbi, "Ibn Khaldūn," *EI*^{2}.

[4] Khalidi describes Ibn Kathīr's *Al-Bidāyah wa'l-nihāyah* as the culmination of *siyāsah*-oriented historiography. *Arabic Historical Thought*, 184.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The Discourse

When we consider the developments in Islamic historiography from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century one thing that stands out is the introduction of universal chronicles and biographical dictionaries in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century, alongside regional and dynastic works, and then the overwhelming production of universal chronicles in the late thirteenth and fourteenth century, only to be replaced in the fifteenth century with a focus on Egypt past and present. Such a trend begs for further exploration and explanation.

To make the point more strongly consider the following survey of historical sources. In the late twelfth century Ibn ʿAsākir wrote a history of Damascus and Saladin had several court chroniclers. These sources portray their subjects in laudatory and idealized terms and are examples "*siyasa*-oriented historiography," written with the encouragement of local rulers. At roughly the same time Ibn al-Jawzī wrote an annalistic chronicle, but one that incorporated biographies and retained a laudatory and white-washed tone. In the thirteenth century Ibn al-ʿAdīm (d. 660/1262) wrote a history of Aleppo, Ibn ʿAbd al-Ẓāhir (620-92/1223-92) wrote about the career of the Mamlūk sulṭān, Baybars, and Ibn al-Athīr wrote *Taʾrīkh al-bāhir* on the Zangids of Mosul. But Ibn al-Athīr also wrote *Al-Kāmil fī'l-taʾrīkh,* a universal chronicle that relies heavily on al-Ṭabarī and in the narrative of ʿUthmān shows no qualms about including negative or controversial aspects of ʿUthmān's caliphate. Similarly, Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī wrote a universal chronicle, *Mirʾat al-zamān*, in which he makes little effort to portray ʿUthmān or the Companions in a positive light.

Compare this with the number of universal chronicles produced in the century and a half after the fall of Baghdad to the Mongols.[5] The best known are Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ʿUthmān al-Dhahabī's (d. 748/1348) *Taʾrīkh al-Islām* (*History of Islam*) and Imād al-Dīn ibn Kathīr's (d. 774/1373) *al-Bidāyah wa 'l-nihāyah* (*The Beginning and the End*). But we should remember as well Abū al-Fidāʾ (d. 732/1331) wrote *al-Mukhtaṣar fī taʾrīkh al-bashar* (*Summary of the History of Mankind*), Baybars al-Manṣūrī (d. 725/1324-25) *Zubdat al-fikra fī taʾrīkh al-hijra* (*Choice Thoughts on Hijra History*), Sayf al-Dīn Abū Bakr ibn al-Dawādārī (d. after 736/1335-36) *Kanz al-durar wa-jāmiʿ al- ghurar* (*Treasure of Pearls and Trove of Outstanding [Events]*), Al-Kutubī (d. 764/1362-3) *ʿUyūn al-tawārīkh* (*The Fountains of History*) and al-Muqrī (d. after 766/1320-1) *Naẓar al-jumān fī tarājim al-aʿayan* (*Examination of the Pearls in the Biographies of Noble Men*). In addition to these histories, Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Nuwayrī (d. 732/1331-32) wrote *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab* (*All that can be Desired in the Scribal Arts*) and Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī (d.749/1349) *Masālik al-Abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār* (*Paths to Discernment into the Kingdoms of the Developed Places*) both of which are encyclopedias of all a scribe should know and which contain historical sections, two thirds in fact of al-Nuwayrī's work. We should also mention Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl b. Aybak al-Ṣafadī's (d.

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[5] The following survey is based in large part on the work of Donald P. Little in *An Introduction to Mamlūk Historiography* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH, 1970) and "Historiography of the Ayyūbid and Mamlūk Epochs" in *The Cambridge History of Egypt volume I, 640-1517*, ed. Carl Petry, 412-444 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

764/1363) massive biographical dictionary, *Wāfī bil-wafayāt* (*The Completion of the Obituaries [of Ibn Khallikān*). Finally, wrapping up the century is Naṣir al-Dīn Muḥammad Ibn al-Furāt's (d. 801/1405) *Ta'rīkh al-duwal wa'l-mulūk* (*History of Dynasties and Kings*), a universal history that has survived only in fragments, and of course Walī al-Dīn ᶜAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Khaldūn's (d. 808/1405-6) *Kitāb al-ᶜibar*[6] (*Book of Those Things that Must be Considered*).

This corpus of material stands in mark contrast with the fifteenth century in which the overwhelming number of histories and biographical dictionaries focus on Egypt. Among these are histories by Maqrīzī, Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf ibn Taghrībirdī, (d. 874/1470) and Muḥammad b. Aḥmad ibn Iyās (d. ca. 930/1524) and the biographical dictionaries of Shihāb al-Dīn Abū'l-Fadl ibn Ḥajar al-ᶜAsqalānī (d. 852/1449) and Shams al-Dīn al-Sakhāwī (d. 902/1497). Badr al-Dīn al-ᶜAynī (d. 855/ 1451) appears to be the only historian of the period to write a universal chronicle, which in contrast to the previous century may, make him the exception that proves the rule.[7] Moreover, Ibn Ḥajar's biographical dictionary, which summarizes ᶜUthmān's reign in a mere three to four pages, and works like Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī's (d. 911/1505) *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, mark a clear return to earlier *ḥadīth*-based laudatory biographies.[8]

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[6] In addition some contemporary histories were written as continuations of these universal histories, namely al-Yūnīnī (d. 726/1325-26) wrote a continuation of *Mir'at al-zamān* and al-Wardī (d. 749/1348-49) wrote *Tatimmat al-mukhtaṣar fī akhbār al-baṣar* a continuation of Abū'l-Fiḍa's history.

[7] Maqrīzī's treatises on early Islamic issues may mark the outer limits of fourteenth century trends, the influence of his teacher, Ibn Khaldūn, or a more critical attitude based on his failure to attain court patronage. See Anne Broadbridge, "Academic Rivalry and the Patronage System in Fifteenth-Century Egypt: al-ᶜAynī, al-Maqrīzī, and Ibn Ḥajar al-ᶜAsqalānī," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 3 (1999): 91-94.

[8] Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Ta'rīkh al-khulafā'*, ed. Muḥammad Ṣaḥī'l-Dīn ᶜAbd al-Ḥamīd (Beirut: al-Maktabat al-ᶜAṣriyyah, 1997); al-Suyūtī, The History of the Khalifahs who took the Right Way being a Translation of the Chapters on al-Khulafa' al-Rashidun from Ta'rīkh al-Khulafa' of Jalal ad-Din as-Suyuti, trans. ᶜAbdassamad Clarke (London: Ta-Ha Publishers Ltd., 1995); Ibn Ḥajar al-ᶜAsqalānī,

The significance of the Mongol invasion, the fall of Baghdad, and the rise of the Mamlūks is the most obvious explanation for the rapid rise and decline in universal chronicles. Rather than lumping together the challenges posed by the Crusaders and the Mongols, greater attention should be given to the ideological shake up caused by the end of a political system based on the ʿAbbāsid caliphate that had lasted half of a millennium and had been the linchpin for negotiating many religio-political compromises during that time. Second, rather than continuity between the Ayyūbid and Mamlūk regimes, or even the system of the sultanate generally, I suggest that the end of the ʿAbbāsid caliphate threw the theoretical weakness of sultanate into stark relief. Not only was its legitimacy more tenuous, but the status of the Mamlūks themselves was clearly inferior to their Ayyūbid predecessors. Not only did they begin their careers as newly-converted slaves, but force and conflict characterized the system to an even higher degree than before. It was also a particularly turbulent time throughout the Mediterranean world, from al-Andalus to Anatolia.[9] These features also help to explain why there was a drop off in universal chronicles in the fifteenth century. The Mongols and the ʿAbbāsids were but a memory; the Mamlūk system was proving both durable and effective, and the Circassian Mamlūks (1382-1516) more so than their predecessors the Bahrī Mamlūks (1240-1382).[10]

Kitāb al-iṣābah fī tamyīz al-ṣaḥābah, Vol. 2 (Cairo: Maṭbʿah al-Shʿārah bi'jiwār Maḥāfẓah Maṣr, 1910).

[9] R. Stephen Humphreys, "Ayyubids, Mamluks, and the Latin East in the Thirteenth Century," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 2 (1998): 11.

[10] Amalia Levanoni, "The Mamluk Conception of the Sultanate," *IJMES* 26 (1994): 374.

The peak in the production of universal chronicles in the century and a half following the fall of Baghdad to the Mongols could have been due not only to historical events, but also the momentum of the historical discourse itself. It is possible that the renewed interest in the early Islamic conquests (*futūḥ*) in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries forced scholars to look again at the tragedy of *fitnah* that followed close on their heels. Did victory over the Crusaders while the majority of the eastern Islamic lands were swallowed up by the Mongols resonate with earlier triumphs and tragedies? The immediate reaction against Shīʿism may support this interpretation. It could also be that the "rediscovery" of al-Ṭabarī in Ibn al-Athīr encouraged renewed interest in the early sources and the controversies recorded therein. The vast majority of the surviving al-Ṭabarī manuscripts, of which there are more than forty, are thirteenth century copies, produced either in Cairo or the Jazira. Did renewed exposure to the more controversial narratives found in al-Ṭabarī and his contemporaries require a re-evaluation and re-interpretation of those narratives? And once that re-evaluation was done in light of the new religio-political circumstances, did the narrative settle down once more to a familiar pattern or alter again into some as yet unstudied configuration? These questions shift the focus away from the number of chronicles produced to how the past is portrayed in those chronicles.

Not only a catalogue of sources, but a textual analysis as well, confirms the image of a re-invigorated historical debate in the fourteenth century. A sampling of the sources from the fourteenth century listed above reveals a wide variety of perspectives on ʿUthmān that reflect an ongoing dynamism between past and present.

In this chapter I consider al-Nuwayrī's *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, Ibn al-Dawādārī's *Kanz al-durar wa jāmiʿ al-ghurar*, al-Dhahabī's *Taʾrīkh al-Islām*, Ibn Kathīr's *Al-Bidāyah wa'l-nihāyah*, and Ibn Khaldūn's *Kitāb al-ʿibar*. In this way I include the perspective of religious scholars from Damascus, a bureaucrat in Cairo, a son of a Mamlūk, and the first Muslim historian to develop a critical theory of history and historical writing. Al-Nuwayrī, the scribe, basically gives a verbatim transcript of Ibn al-Athīr and al-Ṭabarī. Rather than confirming expectations of a dead narrative, however, contrasting him with Ibn al-Dawādārī, al-Dhahabī, Ibn Kathīr, and Ibn Khaldūn highlights how strongly the personalities of these latter chroniclers come through in their texts. In order to appreciate the individualism of these authors, it is necessary to understand how they were responding to contemporary circumstances.

Sunnīs and Shīʿites

Thus far in this study, the post-Ṭabarī narratives of ʿUthmān have addressed the Sunnī-Shīʿite tensions arising from the revolt against ʿUthmān and subsequent *fitnahs*. As discussed above, the second half of the thirteenth century, immediately after the fall of the ʿAbbāsid caliphate, was a time of particularly sharp anti-Shīʿite activity. The new Mamlūk rulers sought to consolidate their position as defenders of the faith by vanquishing the external threat posed by the Crusaders and the Mongols and the internal threat of heresy. According to Ira Lapidus, "The passion for holy war spilled over into intense impatience with Muslim heretics. Damascenes volunteered with special fervor to war against the infidels within. The Shīʿite minorities in Syria were ravaged, and the mountain regions subjected to stricter orthodox control. The Muslim community triumphant brooked no defiance."[11] As the Mamlūk period progressed, however, pogroms were replaced with scholarly polemics and isolated persecutions.

The Shīʿite Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ḥillī's (d. 726/1325) summary of Shīʿite political and religious doctrines, *Minhāj al-karāmah fī maʿrifat al-imāmah*, was promptly refuted by Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728/1328) in *Minhāj al-sunnah*, which in turn was summarized by Ṣafīl-Dīn al-Baghdadī (d. 739/1339) in Iraq, al-Dhahabī in Syria, and al-Suyūṭī in Egypt.[12] In 755/1354 another Shīʿite from Ḥilla entered the Umayyad mosque in Damascus, refused to pray the midday prayer with those gathered there, and instead abused Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, and others, claiming they had violated the rights of the Prophet's descendents through Fāṭimah and ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib.[13] The historian Ibn Kathīr participated in the trial, in which the man was found guilty of blasphemy and summarily executed. Inspired by the trial, the Shāfiʿī jurist Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 755/1355) wrote a short treatise on the appropriate punishment for blasphemy against Muḥammad and the Companions.

Al-Subkī's arguments not only reveal ongoing concern with heresy and the jurists' efforts to combat it, but a continued ambivalence in such debates over the status of ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān. Building on earlier scholars, Al-Subkī concludes that abuse of ʿUthmān, unlike blasphemy against Abū Bakr and ʿUmar, did not equal unbelief, or at least not directly. Al-Subkī analyzes the difference between unbelief (*kufr*) and concealed unbelief (*zandaqah*),[14] as well as between external (*ẓāhir*) and internal (*bāṭin*) aspects of the law. According to Ibn Ḥanbal (and cited by al-Subkī), abuse of ʿUthmān indicated *zandaqah* not *kufr*, most likely because he did not think it was deserving of death, but some other penalty. Although al-Subkī agrees that abuse of ʿUthmān does not in itself constitute unbelief, it would still require the same punishment because it accuses the Companions of lying when they chose a less qualified candidate in ʿUthmān – and calling the others liars is indeed an act of unbelief.[15] So whereas vilification of the other Companions is unbelief, vilification of ʿUthmān is concealed unbelief because it accuses the Companions of having agreed on a wrong decision.[16] The reputation of the Companions and the early community were foundational to any calls for religious and political reform in the present. It was important to defend the Companions not only as a means of combating Shīʿism, but also of combating any heresy that undermined Sunnī orthodoxy more broadly speaking.

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[11] Ira Lapidus, *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages*, 2d ed (London: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 12-13.

[12] Henri Laoust, "Les Fondements de L'imamat dans le Minhāğ D'Al-Ḥillī," *REI* 46:1 (1978): 6.

[13] Lutz Wiederhold, "Blasphemy against the Prophet Muhammad and his Companions (*Sabb al-Rasūl, Sabb al-Ṣaḥābah*): the Introduction of the Topic into Shāfiʿī Legal Literature and its Relevance for Legal Practice under Mamluk Rule," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 42 (Spring 1997): 47.

Scholarship suggests that men like Ibn Taymiyyah and al-Subkī viewed their own age as "teeming with heresies and innovations (*bidaʿ*)."[17] According to Tarif Khalidi, "Ibn Taymiyyah wrote and acted as if a new Jahiliyya had overtaken the community, a resurgent idol-worship (*wathaniyya*) threatening to subvert Islam and the Muslims and driving them to imitate the beliefs and practices of Christians."[18] Similarly, "Subkī looked carefully at his own age and did not like what he saw. Neither the Mamluk military elite nor the scholars and professionals of his age seemed to be doing their duty."[19] In this light, Shīʿism was one point of contention among many. Orthodox Sunnī Islam was hemmed in from below by Sufism, veneration of saints, and lax moral behavior, and from above by the Turkic-speaking, marginally Muslim Mamlūks.[20]

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[14] Although a serious charge in its own right, *zandaqah*, unlike *kufr*, does not require capital punishment.
[15] Ibid., 57.
[16] Ibid., 59.
[17] Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought*, 187.

According to Jonathan Berkey the conservatism of men like Ibn Taymiyyah was a reaction to the Mamlūk rulers themselves. Berkey calls for greater appreciation of how the "Islamic Middle Period" was one in which "social, political, cultural and even religious institutions and practices were all in a state of flux."[21] He states:

> The centuries between, say, the arrival of the Crusaders and the conquest of Egypt and the Levant by the Ottomans were ones of enormous upheaval in the social, political and cultural fabric of the Islamic societies of the Near East. The European Crusaders were in some ways the least of the problems faced by contemporary Muslims: more threatening to the social and political order were the repeated waves of Turkic and Mongol invasion and settlement, culminating in the continual stream of immigrating Mamlūks themselves. The challenge posed by these immigrants and conquerors, I suspect, lay at the

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[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid. Jonathan Berkey adds, "Might we not see the polemics of men such as Ibn al-Ḥājj and Ibn Taymiyya, not so much as rearguard actions to defend an Islam they had inherited intact from earlier generations, but rather as an attempt to assert control, to define authoritatively a cultural complex which had always been fluid and dynamic, but which, through a variety of external and internal pressures, looked to their eyes to be on the verge of spiraling out of control?" Berkey, "The Mamluks as Muslims: the military elite and the construction of Islam in medieval Egypt," in *The Mamlūks in Egyptian Politics and Society*, eds. Thomas Philipp and Ulrich Haarmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 168.

[20] It is also important to remember the social upheaval caused by the Black Death. Berkey notes: "Its effects were tremendous but by no means uniform: on the one hand, the omnipresence of death left Muslims with renewed commitment to Islam and to formal expressions of piety and morality, and on the other it carved a deeper niche for mysticism, magic, and other expressions of popular religion." Ibid. See also Michael Dols, *The Black Death in the Middle Eat* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).

[21] Berkey, "The Mamluks as Muslims."

> roots of the feeling of vulnerability and decay which fuelled the frustrations of men such as Ibn al-Ḥājj and Ibn Taymiyya, and of their articulation of a rigorously traditional ideology.[22]

Berkey is particularly concerned with the role of the Mamlūks themselves on medieval Islamic thought and practice. He concludes: "One of the major desiderata of Mamlūk studies must be an investigation of the ways in which alternative patterns of thought and practice, those associated with the new Turkish elite, may have challenged older Islamic patterns and influenced them."[23] He believes the *ʿulamāʾ* of the period would have been equally aware of such influence and worked to restrain it or use it for their own ends. The defining of religious heresy was closely related to the power struggles between the *ʿulamāʾ* and the Mamlūks. Whereas in earlier periods the *ʿulamāʾ* and the rulers worked together to define orthodoxy and eradicate heresy for the sake of stability, in the Mamlūk period the *ʿulamāʾ* both cooperated and clashed with the rulers.

Rulers and ʿUlamāʾ

A dominant feature of the post-Ṭabarī historical discourse of ʿUthmān has been the consensual support for the state for the sake of unity and stability. The growing influence of the *ʿulamāʾ* from the eleventh century on also encouraged their growing self-awareness and, in the Mamlūk period, self-assertiveness. Rather than mutual cooperation between the *ʿulamāʾ* and the state, we see cooperation and confrontation.[24] The *ʿulamāʾ* had for some time labeled rivals as heretics and called upon the power of the state to enforce their pronouncements. Similarly, the state could call upon the *ʿulamāʾ* to label political rivals heretics. But the relationship became even more complicated in the Mamlūk period.

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[22] Ibid., 167.

[23] Ibid. Although this view is gaining more and more attention, the need for it was stated as early as 1967 by Ira Lapidus when he observed, "Muslim cities are never regarded as communities but as collections of isolated internal groups unable to cooperate in any endeavor of the whole, with notables capable of common action only on an exceptional and ad hoc basis – as cities governed by fixed administrative arrangements imposed by imperial regimes, and by the ascription, through unchanging tradition, of certain essential tasks to different classes and bodies of society. Rarely have they been understood as living and vital organisms." He sets out to correct this perspective in *Muslim Cities in the Later Middle Ages*, focusing especially on the role of the *ʿulamāʾ*.

Ibn Taymiyyah's life illustrates the complex relationship between the *ʿulamāʾ* and the Mamlūks.[25] Although the state claimed to arrest Ibn Taymiyyah because of his doctrinal views, "all the historians explain the conflict between Ibn Taymiyya and the state in terms of persons rather than doctrines."[26] That is Ibn Taymiyyah's rivals, either from other legal schools or simply those jealous of his influence with those in government and with the masses, spread rumors that he was preaching heresies or had political aspirations. It is true that Ibn Taymiyyah was also summoned to Cairo, interrogated, and detained because he had written a letter denouncing the Sūfī master of the Mamlūk al-Amīr Baybars al-Jāshnakīr's spiritual adviser. But Baybars al-Jāshnakīr was also using Ibn Taymiyyah in his own rivalry with another Mamlūk, Salār, who subsequently secured Ibn Taymiyyah's release from prison.[27] Despite the fact that Ibn Taymiyyah had no intention of changing the leadership of the state, at least not in any way involving himself; "nevertheless, given the political instability of the time – al-Malik an-Nāṣir, after all, was deposed twice – the fact that he had influence over the *amīrs* of Syria and aroused the enthusiasm of the masses must have given the rulers of Egypt pause, especially when complaints about him reached their ears from their religious advisors."[28] The link between political aspirations and supposed religious innovations was not unique to Ibn Taymiyyah.

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[24] Michael Chamberlain describes competition between the members of the *ʿulamāʾ* for state patronage and positions, but not conflict between the *ʿulamāʾ* and the state.

[25] Donald Little, "The Historical and Historiographical Significance of the Detention of Ibn Taymiyya,"in *History and Historiography of the Mamlūks* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1986). First appeared in *IJMES* 4 (1973): 311-327.

[26] Ibid., 323

[27] Ibid., 325.

In 787/1386 a rebellion took place in Damascus, which, according to Lutz Wiederhold, was in large part motivated by a desire to enhance the political significance of the caliph who remained a puppet figurehead during the Mamlūk period.[29] Nevertheless, the rebels were labeled "Ẓāhirī" heretics in order to undermine their political objectives. The state was able to enlist the support of some of the *ʿulamāʾ* to make this judgment in order to condemn those *ʿulamāʾ* who had supported the revolt. Wiederhold concludes: "Mamluks and ulema did not constitute two monolithic groups that acted independently of or in opposition to each other. On various occasions, members of the two groups formed temporary alliances in order to realize personal or factional aims."[30] Whereas in earlier periods the *ʿulamāʾ* competed with each other for state favor, they now appear to be competing more actively with different factions within the government itself.[31] Wiederhold concludes his article by stating, "in order to understand the functioning of Mamluk society in general and the relationship between Mamluks and ulema and between individual members of the learned elite in particular, it seems essential to analyze the close link between religious doctrinal convictions and particular socio-political motives."[32]

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[28] Ibid.

[29] Lutz Wiederhold, "Legal-Religious Elite, Temporal Authority, and the Caliphate in Mamluk Society: Conclusions Drawn from the Examination of a 'Zahiri Revolt' in Damascus in 1386," *IJMES* 31:2 (1999): 203-235.

[30] Ibid., 225.

[31] "Ambitious scholars who were not able to further enhance their position in the hierarchy of the learned and religious office holders in the process of scholarly competition offered religious legitimation to Mamluk officers who rebelled against the sultan and then replaced their rivals in paid positions after a successful revolt. At the same time, the context of the fitna Zahiriyya suggests that Mamluk officials could count on the assistance of established ulema in silencing political protest of certain scholars." Ibid.

The *ʿulamāʾ* were not motivated simply by a desire to further their own political or professional ambitions. In the Mamlūk period there was a growing sense of the *ʿulamāʾ*'s authority and the need to exercise it for the good of the community. This meant re-interpreting old ideas in order to respond properly to new challenges. For example, Wiederhold suggests al-Subkī was motivated to write his treatise against blasphemy because there was "a lack of rules concerning blasphemy against the Prophet and his Companions in the legal textbooks and. . . it was necessary to create a coherent legal concept of *sabb*."[33] Wiederhold states: "In order to prove the admissibility of developing the law he [al-Subkī] quotes an opinion attributed to Mālik stating: 'There will be new rules developed for the people to the extent to which there will occur new offences.' Reflecting on this opinion, he [al-Subkī] states that legal rules do not change with time but according to the changing circumstances of the legal incidents.[34] This echoes Jonathan Berkey's view that Mamlūk society was in a great state of fluidity and that Sunnī scholars and jurists were doing all they could to delineate what was acceptable behavior and belief. Individual scholars had an increased sense of obligation and individual freedom in carrying this out.

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[32] Ibid., 226. He too is pointing for finding out individual perspectives, even though thus far what work that has been done has grouped scholars into the *siyāsah*-minded and *sharīʿah* minded – a reformulation of the older debate between unity and justice in which elevation of *siyāsah* allowed for greater pragmatism in order to maintain unity and the latter called rulers to abide by Islamic codes of justice.
[33] Wiederhold, "Blasphemy," 61.
[34] Ibid.

The *ʿulamā*'s greater sense of responsibility and self-importance is also detectable in the historical discourse. Tarif Khalidi notes how growing self-awareness led to more divisions and mutual strictures among the historians themselves. Ibn al-Athīr criticized Ibn al-Jawzī, Ibn Tahgrībirdī criticized al-Maqrīzī and Ibn Khaldūn criticized everyone. Khalidi concludes that historians had "come to be increasingly conscious of the pitfalls of their own discipline, especially of the possible errors of judgment and assessment of character and motive."[35] Similarly, Michael Cooperson finds in Mamlūk biographers and historians expressing a burden of responsibility to their subjects and their audiences. In contrast to the idealized images of the ʿAbbāsid Caliph al-Maʾmūn found in the biographical literature of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Mamlūk writers included all the available evidence in order to undermine earlier false flattery and put individuals and events within their proper historical perspective.[36] This proper historical perspective, however, often reflected contemporary circumstances.[37] For example, the passing of the ʿAbbāsid caliphate made it much easier for al-Maqrīzī to criticize the caliphs and, by extension, political authority in general.[38]

Caliphs and Sulṭāns

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[35] Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought*, 203.

[36] Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography*, 66.

[37] Cooperson notes how Mamlūk writers, in their descriptions of the ʿAbbāsid Caliph al-Maʾmūn and the baleful influence of his court theologians, reformulated "a division of labor that echoes actual arrangements in the Mamlūk period: a figurehead caliph, a sultan with (theoretically) limited juristic authority, and a scholarly class that enjoyed a (theoretical) monopoly on interpretive authority." Ibid., 191.

[38] Al-Maqrīzī, "Book of Contention and Strife," 101-3.

The greater dynamism between the ʿulamāʾ and the rulers and within the historical discourse in the Mamlūk period was in part due to the nature of the Mamlūk regime.[39] The sultanate was held by a succession of men who had begun their careers as mamlūks, slave-soldiers. As converts to Islam of unknown lineage who seized power from their Ayyūbid lords, the Mamlūks had much greater need of the *ʿulamāʾ* to legitimize their rule and to act as a bridge with their Arabic-speaking subjects.[40] On the other hand, they held a certain degree of legitimacy, ruling as they did during a time of unprecedented crisis. Not only did they continue jihād against the Crusaders, they stopped the Mongol advance that had destroyed all in its path including Baghdad and the ʿAbbāsid caliphate.[41] R.S. Humphreys notes, "Thus the early Mamlūk Empire derived exceptional prestige from the fact that it was the only major Muslim state between the Atlantic Ocean and the Hindu Kush which could hold its own against powerful non-Muslim enemies – the only one which could defend the cause of Islam in a desperate age."[42]

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[39] Chamberlain observes, "Sulṭāns had few if any of the attributes of sacred kingship. They had few ritual functions or duties, no numinous properties, no sacral powers of healing or rule-making, nor any privileged relation to the divine. Unable to assert control over the sacred, rulers had rather to negotiate the use of it from others who were its arbiters." Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice*, 49. Amalia Levanoni argues that factionalism was the "mainspring of Mamluk politics" and that this affected their conception of the sultanate. "Because the Mamluk sultan was dependent almost exclusively on force at all times, his hold on authority was tenuous." Levanoni, "The Mamluk Conception of the Sultanate," 375.

[40] The Mamlūks were of primarily Turkish and Circassian origin.

[41] "The frontier established between Mamlūk and Mongol territory as a result of Mamlūk resistance remains to this day roughly the boundary between the Arabic-speaking and the Persian cultural zones." Linda S. Northrup, "The Baḥrī Mamlūk sultanate, 1250-1390," in *The Cambridge History of Egypt, vol. 1 Islamic Egypt, 640-1517* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 243.

[42] R.S. Humphreys, "Egypt in the World System in the Later Middle Ages," in *The Cambridge History of Egypt, vol. 1 Islamic Egypt, 640-1517* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 453.

Military strength was the surest foundation in the Mamlūks' bid for legitimacy, but they also appealed to religious principles and manipulated the ʿAbbāsid caliph's prestige for their own purposes. The first Mamlūk Sulṭān Baybars had appointed an ʿAbbāsid survivor as caliph in Cairo and then quickly disposed of him by sending him off on a fool's errand to retake Baghdad from the Mongols. Having defeated the Mongols at ʿAyn Jālūt, Baybars did not feel the need for caliphal support until the arrival of a delegation from the Golden Horde in 661/1262. The delegation brought news of their leader Berke Khān's conversion to Islam. Baybars needed to strengthen his own position so that his rival, now a Muslim, could not demand obeisance from Baybars, who was, after all, only a slave. Baybars responded by inviting the delegation to the inauguration ceremony of another ʿAbbāsid survivor, al-Ḥākim. Baybars swore allegiance to the caliph; "in return al-Ḥākim invested Baybars with the care of Muslim lands and Muslims in general, exhorted him to perform jihad, appointed Baybars his partner in supporting the truth [of religion], and finished by giving two brief sermons."[43] Ḥākim concluded his sermons by "exhorting his listeners to fight the holy fight, and reminded them of their religious duty to obey those in command, i.e., Baybars."[44]

Baybars used the ʿAbbāsid caliphate to strengthen his own legitimacy against the "ideologically awe-inspiring Chinggis Khanid,"[45] but once cordial relations were established, Baybars and his successors abandoned references to the caliph.[46] He kept Ḥākim under virtual house arrest in the citadel. Not only was he no longer needed to strengthen Mamlūk legitimacy with external rivals, but the caliph may also have "represented a potential rallying point for would-be rivals in Egypt and Syria, and thus had to be kept in seclusion."[47] Although the caliph may have bolstered the position of the Mamlūks in the eyes of the Mongols, it is not clear that he made much of an impression at home.[48]

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[43] Anne Broadbridge, "Mamlūk Legitimacy and the Mongols: The Reigns of Baybars and Qalāwūn," *Mamlūk Studies Review* 5 (2001): 97.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid., 98. Broadbridge, notes that the references to the ʿAbbāsid caliph do not appear in correspondence with the pagan Ilkhanids. Ibid., 109.

Mamlūk sulṭāns after Baybars continued to retain the caliph within the citadel and to wheel him out for formal occasions. Even the symbolic gesture of the caliph accepting the oath of loyalty from the sulṭān, in return for conferring on him legitimacy as the defender of Islam and Muslims, dissipated in the fourteenth century. P.M. Holt notes that from the mid-fifteenth century on it was actually the caliph who gave the oath of loyalty (*bayʿa*) to the Mamlūk sulṭān. He adds that when the last Qalawunid Mamlūk began his reign in 791/1389, "the *bayʿa* was given by the caliph and the judges in association, a procedure which was repeated on the accession of al-Ẓāhir Ṭaṭar in 824/1421. This suggests that the caliph was no longer regarded as even nominally the sovereign of the Islamic community, but was assimilated in status to the four judges.'"[49] Holt goes on to cite a reference from the late fifteenth century that implies the caliph's *bayʿa* transmitted the caliphate itself to the sulṭān.[50] Such a view is echoed by Ibn Khaldūn in the *The Muqaddimah*, the introduction to his universal history. He sates: "Thus, (the caliphate) in reality is a substitute for Muḥammad inasmuch as it serves, like him, to protect the religion and to exercise leadership in the world. . . (The institution) is called 'the caliphate' or 'the imamate'. The person in charge of it is called 'the caliph' or 'the imam'. In later times, he has been called 'the sultan.'[51] The position of the ʿAbbāsid caliph in Cairo was clearly something more (or less) than merely another devaluation of power dating back to the Būyids in the tenth century.[52] Even the symbol of the sacred appears to have left the political realm.

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[46] Baybars sent gifts to the Mongol ruler that emphasized religious devotion. In addition to military equipment for waging jihād and items of worship such as prayer carpets, Baybars sent "a copy of the Quran alleged to be in the handwriting of the third caliph, ʿUthmān." Ibid., 99.

[47] Ibid., 100.

[48] Broadbridge also notes, "al-Ḥākim's activity in general under Qalāwūn was extremely circumscribed: no sermons, no *futūwah* ceremonies, no recorded relationship to the ongoing diplomacy with the Golden Horde." Ibid., 104. P.M. Holt adds the point that the caliph was not present when the sulṭān held court at the palace of justice (*dār al-ʿadl*). P.M. Holt, "The Structure of Government in the Mamlūk Sultanate," in *The Eastern Mediterranean Lands in the Period of the Crusades*, ed., P.M. Holt, 44-61 (Warminster, England: Aris & Phillips, ltd., 1977), 58.

But in the waning of caliphal religious authority, the Mamlūks sought to strengthen their position not only as the defenders of Islam, but as one of its definers as well. The Mamlūk sulṭāns Baybars and Qalāwūn claimed a position of religious superiority in their correspondence with the recently converted rulers of the Golden Horde and then later the Ikhanids. They presented themselves as more mature spiritual advisors, urging Töde Mönke and Tegüder to follow true religion, enforce

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[49] Holt, "The Structure of Government," 45.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, trans. by Franz Rosenthal; ed. and abridged by N.J. Dawood, Bollingen Series (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 155.

[52] Al-Maqrīzī believed the ʿAbbāsid caliphate ended with the fall of Baghdad; he did not appear to recognize the legitimacy of those "survivors" placed on the throne in Cairo. Al-Maqrīzī, "Book of Contention and Strife," 103. Ibn Khaldūn gives the ʿAbbāsids of Cairo only slightly more credibility when he states: "Royal authority in Egypt is most peaceful and firmly rooted, because Egypt has few dissidents or people who represent tribal groups. Egypt has a sultan and subjects. Its ruling dynasty consists of the Turkish rulers and their groups. They succeed each other in power, and the rule circulates among them, passing from one branch to another. The caliphate belongs in name to an ʿAbbāsid, a descendant of the ʿAbbāsid caliphs of Baghdad." Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, 131-2.

sharīʿah, and engage in jihād against the infidel.[53] At home, the Mamlūks participated in theological debates and there is evidence of discussion and reading groups meeting at the court.[54] The Mamlūks' interest in and ability to shape Islam was exactly what, according to Jonathan Berkey, gave the *ʿulamāʾ* pause.[55] Not only were the chief judges of the four legal schools appointed by the Mamlūks, but their jurisdiction was largely restricted to civil cases between ordinary Muslims.[56] Moreover, the *siyāsah* justice dispersed by the sulṭān or his delegate in court was by the time of Maqrīzī in the first half of the fifteenth century, encroaching even further on that of the *sharīʿah* judges.[57]

The passing of the caliphate and the growing power of the Mamlūks encouraged a reevaluation of the proper relationship between *siyāsah* and *sharīʿah*. According to Tarif Khalidi scholars prioritized either one or the other.[58] The problem with presenting a dichotomy between *siyāsah* and *sharīʿah*, however, is that it too easily leads to a picture of the medieval *ʿulamāʾ* collaborating with the state all the while wringing their hands in despair at the absence of an ideal justice. I believe the fall of the ʿAbbāsid caliphate encouraged scholars to face the brutalities of political power while having a potentially larger arena within which to enforce *sharīʿah*.

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[53] Broadbridge, "Mamluk Legitimacy and the Mongols," 103, 113.

[54] Berkey, "The Mamluks as Muslims," 170.

[55] Berkey states, "As jurists such as Ibn al-Ḥājj were painfully aware, religious belief and practice were, in a way, redefined by each succeeding generation. There was nothing to prevent the Mamluks, as well as any other social group, from participating in the dynamic process of constructing and reconstructing Islam." Ibid., 173.

[56] Holt, "The Structure of Government," 59.

[57] Ibid.

[58] For example, he describes Sibt b. al-Jawzi as a *sharīʿah*-historian while Ibn al-Athir was a *siyāsah*-historian. Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought*, 193.

In Ibn Taymiyyah's treatise entitled *Siyāsah sharīʿah* he denies the necessity of the caliphate, and instead acknowledges the necessity of "political" authority. In the place of the ideal qualities of a ruler (*imām*) or legitimate means of succession, he focuses on the consensus of the community. E.I.J. Rosenthal summarizes Ibn Taymiyyah's position as follows:

> God designates the sovereign through the infallible voice of the community, the *ijmāʿ*. It is clear from this attitude that the centre of gravity has shifted from the *khilāfa* and the *khalīfa* to the community, whose life must be regulated by the divine law. At the same time he pleads for close co-operation between the *imām* – the necessary authority – and the community. He accepts the state as it is and is entirely interested in just government on that basis, whether the *imām* is legal or illegal as far as his assumption of power and authority is concerned, in fact even if he enjoys neither and is a mere figurehead.[59]

It is not the credentials of the ruler upon coming to power, but his actions once in office that determine the amount of support he should receive.

Ibn Taymiyyah "recognizes the *de facto* power of the ruler of the day and the necessity of obedience to authority in the interests of the *Sharīʿa* and for the benefit of the community,"[60] but he does so through a "balance-of-evil analysis."[61] In this Khaled Abou El Fadl regards Ibn Taymiyyah as a revisionist. He analyzes Ibn Taymiyyah's legal pronouncements and concludes that Ibn Taymiyyah endorsed recognizing the political reality of kingship, while actively working to realize the ideal of the caliphate.[62] Although Ibn Taymiyyah was certainly an idealist and willing to face imprisonment for his ideals, he was equally concerned with maintaining the unity of the community. Donald Little notes, "On at least one occasion Ibn Taymiyya himself proposed that he be jailed if this would serve the *maṣlaḥa*, by which he presumably meant the public interest."[63] The Mamlūk period allowed for potentially new compromises between *siyāsah* hand *sharīʿah* based on the Qurʾanic principle of *maṣlaḥah*.

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[59] Erwin I.J. Rosenthal, *Political Thought in Medieval Islam: an Introductory Outline* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 52.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Abou El Fadl, *Rebellion & Violence*, 274.
[62] Ibid., 275.

For example, Ibn Khaldūn allows for a shift from the religious authority of the caliphs to the political authority of the sulṭāns if it is in the "public's interest." There is not, according to Ibn Khaldūn, a division between the matters of this world and the next. Rather, "(Worldly interests) have bearing upon (the interests in the other world), since according to Muḥammad all worldly conditions are to be considered in their relation to their value for the other world."[64] Therefore the purpose of the *sharīʿah* was to serve the public interest – in the present and the future.[65] And "religious law does not censure royal authority as such and does not forbid its exercise. It merely censures the evils resulting from it, such as tyranny, and pleasure-seeking."[66] Although there was an admitted tension between *siyāsah* and *sharīʿah*, it did not have to be a direct opposition and most likely medieval *ʿulamāʾ* did not perceive it that way.[67] One way the *ʿulamāʾ* could argue for different compromises between *siyāsah* and *sharīʿah* was through their portrayals of pivotal events in the past. How they presented the principles of the past was directly related to how they perceived the challenges of the present.

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[63] Little, "The Detention of Ibn Taymiyya," 326.

[64] Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah*, 155.

[65] Ibid., 167.

[66] Ibid., 157.

[67] Rather than opposition or division of roles, a more helpful image perhaps is put forward by the theologian, Walter Wink. He writes: "We are to think, not of two realms – one for God, the other for Caesar – but rather of concentric circles – Caesar's the smaller, and God's the larger. And the church's [or the *ʿulamāʾ*'s] task is to maintain relentless pressure from that larger circle of God on the smaller circle of Caesar." Wink, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), 227.

THE NARRATORS

Al-Nuwayrī was writing a mammoth work of everything a good scribe should know and so it is not too surprising that his treatment of ʿUthmān is the most inclusive, and thus comes across as a bit ambivalent. In contrast, Ibn al-Dawādārī, son of a Mamlūk, clearly has an agenda; what is so surprising is that it is a blatantly pro-ʿAlid one. That this is indeed the case, rather than simply being critical of ʿUthmān, is highlighted by a comparison with al-Dhahabī who is also extremely critical of ʿUthmān. However, al-Dhahabī criticizes ʿUthmān's incompetence leading him to elevate not ʿAlī, but Muʿāwiyah as a decisive ruler. For al-Dhahabī it is force and effectiveness rather than religious or ideological convictions that seem most important. This is in direct contrast to Ibn Kathīr, another Damascene scholar and one of al-Dhahabī's students. Although Ibn Kathīr acknowledges that ʿUthmān made mistakes during his caliphate, his dominant theme is that ultimately ʿUthmān was a pious, although not perfect, ruler. To convey this image Ibn Kathīr relies on positive historical accounts and *ḥadīth* based on the authority of Ibn Ḥanbal. Although not a Ḥanbalī himself, Ibn Kathīr was a disciple of Ibn Taymiyyah, and his positive portrayal of ʿUthmān echoes that of Ibn Ḥanbal.[68] Finally, Ibn Khaldūn is concerned with larger historical forces and how ʿUthmān failed to heed them. Analysis of these authors' portrayals of ʿUthmān highlights the need for further studies on the intersection between individuals and their contemporary social, intellectual, political, and religious milieu.

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[68] Ibn Kathīr was a faithful disciple of Ibn Taymiyyah who asked to be buried next to his master. Laoust, "Ibn Kathīr," *EI²*.

Al-Nuwayrī was a bureaucrat, son of a "*kātib* of note," who worked in both the Egyptian and Syrian office of the "privy purse" and the chancery.[69] His *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab* is a multi-volume encyclopedia in which he addresses everything a scribe should know. The work is divided into four parts: "the first three cover cosmography and natural history, man, and flora and fauna. The last part, comprising two-thirds of the work, is devoted to history, beginning with the creation and ending in 731/1332."[70] The narrative of ʿUthmān occurs in volume nineteen and fills about 130 pages of text.[71]

Ibn al-Dawādārī[72] was a son of a Mamlūk who accompanied his father and was a close observer of his father's activities and duties, citing him as a major source for the latter part of his history *Kanz al-durar wa-jāmiʿ al-ghurar.*[73] Free-born sons of Mamlūks could not in theory, or generally in practice, become regular Mamlūk soldiers themselves. "As a result, some of them turned to *belles lettres* or to a branch of scholarship as a profession and thus served as a bridge between the native Arabic-speaking *ʿulamāʾ* and the alien, Turkic-speaking Mamlūks. Those who became historians, like Ibn al-Dawādārī, tended to take a more personalized approach to historiography than either the bureaucrats or the scholars, while continuing to write within the traditional genres."[74] Ibn al-Dawādārī's section on ʿUthmān is much shorter than al-Nuwayrī's, forty pages in volume three of his nine-volume history. Donald Little describes the milieu and genre reflected in Ibn al-Dawādārī as follows:

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[69] Little, "Historiography of the Ayyūbid and Mamlūk epochs," 430.

[70] Ibid., 430. For more information on this author and source, particularly for the history of the reign of al-Naṣir, see Little, *An Introduction to Mamlūk Historiography*, 24-32.

[71] Al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, ed. Muḥammad Abū al-Fadl Ibrahim (Cairo: Maktabat al-ʿArabiyyah, 1975). This length is a bit deceiving, however, since it is a large, loose typeface.

[72] We know that he must have died some time after 736/1335 since that is when he completed his chronicle. Little, *An Introduction to Mamlūk Historiography,* 10. He began the chronicle in 709/1309-10.

[73] Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz al-durar wa-jāmiʿ al-ghurar*, ed. Muḥammad al-Saʿīd Jamāl al-Dīn (Cairo: VLAAMS Nederlands Instituut in Cairo, 1980).

> The distinctiveness of his history lies in what has been persuasively argued to be the efforts of Ibn al-Dawādārī and other [sic] toward 'literalization' and 'dehistorification' of historiography throughout the Mamlūk period. To achieve the popularization of historical writing, in addition to masking the true identity of his sources Ibn al-Dawādārī adopted a number of literary devices, some of which had long been current, since, in fact, the time of the earliest biographies of the Prophet, which were heavily influenced by narrative, anecdotal, and poetic traditions of professional storytellers. Ibn al-Dawādārī, then, was reviving, or, more accurately, making greater quantitative use of anecdotes, folk romance, poetry, and *adab* in general, often couching these elements in a racy or colloquial style which also served to bring history closer to the reader than the formal impersonal style adopted by most historians. Thus Ibn al-Dawādārī's chronicles exemplify the attempt to break away from a rigid historiographical framework dominated by *ḥadīth* and *ḥadīth*-trained scholars in favor of annals spiced with anecdotes and mirabilia. In the earlier volumes of the *Kanz* these are often derived from popular legends and myths current among the Turks and Mongols.[75]

Since our concern is with the earlier volumes, this aspect of popular literature is relevant. What stands out in his narrative of ʿUthmān is how overwhelming pro-ʿAlid it is. Ibn al-Dawādārī's bias leads him to go so far as to place extended blessings after ʿAlī's name and none after ʿUthmān's, or when he praises Muḥammad, he always includes references to "his house." A more thorough study of the earlier portions of the history may reveal how pervasive and consistent this theme is in the *Kanz*.

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[74] Little, "Ayyūbid and Mamlūk epochs," 424. For more information on him and his chronicle as a source for Mamlūk history see Little, *An Introduction to Mamlūk Historiography*, 10-18.
[75] Little, "Ayyūbid and Mamlūk epochs," 425.

Al-Dhahabī was a "pro-Ḥanbalī" Shafiʿī scholar in Damascus,[76] whose *Ta'rīkh al-Islām* is one of the most famous universal chronicles of the Mamlūk period, if not the later Islamic middle ages.[77] He met regularly with a small group of scholars including Ibn Taymiyyah for study and discussion, but appears to have been what Donald Little calls "a sympathetic critic" of Ibn Taymiyyah.[78] Like many of his contemporaries, al-Dhahabī was "a religious scholar, a historian, and a biographer, who undertook to write a universal history of Islam with addition of obituaries of notable political, religious, and literary figures arranged according to classes in the manner of the *ṭabaqāt* works."[79] Based on the introduction and conclusion in al-Dhahabī's chronicle, he was writing to impart knowledge -- knowledge that would ostensibly aid his readers in their quest for salvation.[80] Apparently, he thought he could do this best not by presenting an idealized past to emulate, but by pointing out errors to avoid, errors that plagued even the Companions of the Prophet.

Al-Dhahabī's concern with political errors that threatened the community – past and present – was no doubt influenced by his own experiences. Al-Dhahabī was an eye-witness of the siege of Damascus by the Mongols in 700/1300-01. The potential significance he attached to this event may help explain why he ended his universal history in the year 699/1300 even though he finished writing it in 1340 and continued another contemporary history up to that date.[81] Al-Dhahabī gives an extended treatment of the rise of the Mongols and their advance through Central Asia, Iran, and the Caucusus, and finally Iraq and Baghdad. Al-Dhahabī prefaces his source for this material with the remark: "This is a report that devours all (similar) reports, an item of news that rolls up other news, a story that causes other stories to be forgotten, an accident in comparison to which other accidents appear slight, and a misfortune that extends over the whole surface of the earth."[82]

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[76] Little, "Did Ibn Taymiyya have a screw loose?," 94 citing Laoust's characterization: 'chafiites hanbalisants' in "Le Hanbalism sous les mamlouks bahrides," *REI* 28 (1960): 58.

[77] Al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām: ʿahd al-khulafāʾ al-rāshidīn*, ed. ʿUmar ʿAbd al-Salām Tadmurī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-ʿArabī, 1987) for years 34 &35 while reports of the *shūrā* are taken from: al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rīkh al-Islām*, Vol. 2 (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qudsī, 1947-60).

[78] Little, *An Introduction to Mamlūk Historiography*, 62.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Cooperson, "The Heirs of the Prophets," 150.

Joseph de Somogyi analyzes al-Dhahabī's first-hand account of the Mongol siege of Damascus and makes the following three observations:

> First, it clearly appears from it that but for the rivalry between the Mamlūk sultan of Egypt and his governor in Damascus the Tatars would not have ventured upon such an attack. . . Then it is evident from this report that the failure of the Tatar attempt was due to the heroic defense of the Commander of the citadel, Arjawāsh, and not the military power of the Mamlūks. . . Thirdly, the Tatars favoured non-Muslims, but were not hostile to the Muslims. They proclaimed their ruler was a Muslim and there can be no doubt that but for their atrocities they would have easily gained possession of Syria.[83]

Al-Dhahabī saw the destruction of Damascus as a cataclysmic event that was the result of poor leadership and internal divisions. This may have influenced his interpretation of the revolt against ʿUthmān. He is critical of ʿUthmān from beginning to end as a weak and ineffectual ruler. In contrast, he presents Muʿāwiyah not as a villain who ushers in hated Umayyad kingship, but as a decisive leader. Al-Dhahabī repeatedly states the authority of the sulṭān should never be challenged -- not even by the Qur'ān. This is a surprising position for a distinguished member of the *ʿulamā'* and one that suggests these authors were writing as individuals whose personal experiences in the present affected how they portrayed the past. The writing of history was neither stagnant nor easily polarized into categories of *ʿulamā'* and Mamlūk, *sharīʿah* and *siyāsah*.

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[81] Joseph de Somogyi, "Adh-Dhahabī's *Ta'rīkh al-islām* as an Authority on the Mongol Invasion of the Caliphate," *JRAS* (1936): 595-604. He may also have wanted the literary affect of ending his history at a century mark.
[82] Ibid., 598.
[83] Ibid., 603.

Al-Dhahabī uses al-Ṭabarī and Ibn ʿAsākir, but also Ibn Saʿd, Khalīfah b. Khayyāṭ, and al-Balādhurī. He rarely names these later compilations, preferring to give the source of the *isnād*. Rather than relying on a few sources, such as Sayf b. ʿUmar or al-Wāqidī, al-Dhahabī includes *akhbār* from almost forty different original sources.[84] Many of these appear in very short, isolated form, rather than extended narratives, thus harkening back to the earliest compilations. It seems likely that al-Dhahabī was simply what modern scholars would consider a more scrupulous historian who made a point of going back to the earliest available sources rather than relying on later compilations.[85]

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[84] Although out-dated, Joseph De Somogyi's study remains the only article length analysis of al-Dhahabī's *Ta'rīkh al-Islam* and he only discusses from the year 300 A.H. on, dismissing the earlier part as brief summaries of Ṭabarī. In the case of ʿUthmān this is clearly not the case. It is not clear then whether ʿUthmān is an exception or whether the entire earlier portion needs to be re-evaluated. Joseph De Somogyi, "The *Ta'rīkh al-islāmi* of adh-Dhahabī," *JRAS* (1932), 815-855. The same has been done to the earlier part of Ibn Kathīr, although more accurately in Henry Laoust's "Ibn Kaṯīr Historien," *Arabica* 2 (1955): 42-88.

[85] Cooperson describes al-Dhahabī as a scrupulous and critical historian. Cooperson "The Heirs of the Prophets," 149.

In contrast, in *Al-Bidāyah wa'l-nihāyah*, Ibn Kathīr uses twelve different sources in his narrative of ʿUthmān.[86] Many of his accounts are in the form of extended narratives rather than short and isolated *akhbār* as in al-Dhahabī. He not only cites al-Ṭabarī specifically several times, but appears to follow to a certain extent a similar format of juxtaposition, as he uses Sayf b. ʿUmar five times and al-Wāqidī seven times. He also relies heavily on Ibn ʿAsākir for lengthy narratives of events and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal for *ḥadīth* that defend ʿUthmān's character and highlight his virtues.

In addition to Ibn Kathīr's use of sources, he contrasts significantly with al-Dhahabī in his emphasis on religious piety rather than political acumen. He acknowledges that ʿUthmān made mistakes, but he vindicates ʿUthmān by focusing on his piety during the final stages of the siege and assassination.[87] He is able to downplay ʿUthmān's political failings by focusing on ʿUthmān's religious qualities. Although consistent with depictions of ʿUthmān in the biographical dictionaries, this was not the norm for the universal chronicles of the ninth century any more than for those of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Ibn Kathīr's idealized portrayal of the Companions may reflect the views of Ibn Taymiyyah and his followers and appears to have been merely one school of thought among many.

Whereas Ibn al-Dawādārī and al-Dhahabī criticize ʿUthmān and Ibn Kathīr defends him, Ibn Khaldūn uses ʿUthmān as another illustration of his theory on the rise and fall of dynasties.[88] What we see in Ibn Khaldūn is a greater interest in larger historical forces. In many ways the explanations Ibn Khaldūn gives for the revolt against 'Uthmān are those taken up by modern scholars, east and west, namely the re-assertion of pre-Islamic tribal loyalties during the reign of ʿUthmān. Although he points out ʿUthmān contributed to the crisis by re-establishing old elites, he does not hold ʿUthmān personally responsible. Rather, ʿUthmān's choices were virtually inevitable ones. Ibn Khaldūn was interested in the predictable patterns of history. According to Tarif Khalidi, "That Ibn Khaldūn sought to pass beyond the particular and the individual to survey history as it unfolded over generations and as it was made by large forces or groups was due at least in part to his time and place in the tradition of *siyasa*."[89] But as has been already mentioned and will now be demonstrated, despite shared time, space, and traditions, each of these authors produced a unique narrative of ʿUthmān.

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[86] Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa'l-nihāyah*, Vol. 7 (Beirut: Maktabat al-Mʿārif, 1966), for the events in years 24-33, while those on the revolt itself are taken from: Ibn Kathīr, *Al-Bidāyah wa'l-nihāyah*, ed. Maktab taḥqīq al-turāth, vol. 8 (Beirut: Dār al-Iḥyā' lil-Turāth al-ʿArabī, n.d.).

[87] El-Hibri has noted that this was a common way to vindicate a fallen leader in *Reinterpreting Islamic Historiography*, 84.

THE NARRATIVES

Turning now to the narrative of ʿUthmān in these sources, I focus on several – by this time familiar – key events: the *shūrā*, the reasons for the revolt, the siege, and the murder. I use al-Nuwayrī as a brief reminder of the "standard narrative" and as a springboard for comparison with Ibn al-Dawādārī's preference for ʿAlī, al-Dhahabī's for firm government, Ibn Kathīr's for religious piety, and Ibn Khaldūn's for historical predictability.

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[88] Ibn Khaldun, *Kitāb al-ʿibar*, vol. 7 (Cairo, n.d) for accounts of the revolt, while the details of ʿUthmān's caliphate come from *Tāʾrīkh Ibn Khaldūn*, vol. 2 (Cairo: Dār al-Bayān).
[89] Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought*, 231.

The Shūrā

As mentioned above, al-Nuwayrī is virtually all-inclusive in his coverage, and this applies to the *shūrā* as well; he gives several accounts of it. That he is covering a range of interpretations is clear from his organization. The first account shows a clear preference for ʿAlī, claiming the caliphate went to ʿUthmān not because he was the best man for the job, but because of the tribal machinations and the allegiances of the *shūrā* members. The next account moves a step away from this by including the conversation between Ibn al-ʿAbbās and ʿAlī in which Ibn al-ʿAbbās blamed ʿAlī for not speaking to Muḥammad about the succession before he died, and that that was why the caliphate passed out of ʿAlī's hands.[90] Al-Nuwayrī also includes the account in which Ibn Abī Sarḥ told Ibn ʿAwf if he wanted to avoid divisions among the Quraysh he should choose ʿUthmān – and we are told that that was what he did. That ʿUthmān was chosen to avoid tribal tensions is also supported by another account in which his election is defended on the basis that if the caliphate went to a member of the Banū Hāshim it would never leave them, but if it went to the Quraysh it established the fact that it was not a hereditary office.[91] In contrast to al-Nuwayrī's multiple versions, conveying a range of tensions, Ibn al-Dawādārī gives one story with one point.

According to Ibn al-Dawādārī there was a fear from the very beginning that ʿUthmān would show favoritism to his family and it was family ties that got him the caliphate. ʿUmar on his deathbed first warned ʿUthmān not to place the Banū Muʿayṭ on the necks of the people should he become caliph. And then again when ʿUmar was asked his opinion of ʿUthmān, he responded: "If he is appointed then he will put the Banū Muʿayt on the necks of the people and if he does that they will kill him for it."[92] But when Ibn ʿAwf was given the authority to choose between ʿUthmān and ʿAlī, he challenged ʿAlī not to favor his clan the Banū al-Muṭṭallib and not to vary at all from the *sunnah* of the Prophet. ʿAlī responded: "I cannot swear a solemn oath before God on what I am unable to do, nor is anyone else able to do it. Who is capable of filling the position of the *sīrah* of God's messenger? But I will follow in the *sīrah* of God's messenger to the best of my ability and understanding."[93] Despite this admirable response Ibn ʿAwf chose ʿUthmān because he was married to ʿUthmān's daughter.[94]

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[90] Al-Nuwayrī, 381.
[91] Ibid., 387.

In contrast to this very one-sided view, al-Dhahabī describes ʿAlī and ʿUthmān as equally viable candidates for the caliphate. In his first account by Miswar b. Makhramah, Ibn ʿAwf secretly asked people whom they would recommend and they all said ʿUthmān was the better man. The second version, based on Anas, shows more controversy when Ibn ʿAwf was asked how he could give the *bayʿa* to ʿUthmān and abandon ʿAlī. He responded that he had no choice when ʿAlī said he would follow the book of God and the *sunnah* in so far as he was able while ʿUthmān said simply, "Yes."[95] The third version is based on al-Wāqidī and describes the community almost equally divided in favor of ʿUthmān and ʿAlī. Al-Dhahabī only makes a backhanded reference to any conspiracies working against ʿAlī's claim to the caliphate when he describes ʿAlī hesitating to give ʿUthmān the oath of loyalty and claiming he had been deceived.[96]

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[92] Ibn al-Dawādārī, 267.
[93] Ibid., 268.
[94] Ibid., 269.
[95] Al-Dhahabī, 74.

Only Ibn Kathīr makes any effort to portray the Companions as unified and ʿUthmān as the best candidate. Accordingly, ʿUmar said there was none equal to ʿAlī and ʿUthmān, but when Ibn ʿAwf questioned the people he "did not find anyone more just than ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān."[97] Rather than any comparison between ʿAlī and ʿUthmān, we are told that only ʿUthmān was asked to uphold the Book of God, the *sunnah* of the Prophet, and the *sīrah* of Abū Bakr and ʿUmar. When he said he would, everyone gave him the oath of allegiance. The only hint of controversy is not over whether ʿAlī should have been nominated, but over whether or not he was the first to give the oath of allegiance to ʿUthmān. And although he notes some say ʿAlī yelled, "Deceit!" and pointed to the family relationship between ʿUthmān and Ibn ʿAwf, Ibn Kathīr says that only God knows. Moreover, he goes on to discuss the activities of the *Rāfiḍah* who divide the community and ignorant people who do not know the difference between reliable and false *akhbār*.[98]

Ibn Khaldūn is not interested in defending ʿUthmān personally or even the unity of the early community. For him the causes of the revolt against ʿUthmān and the collapse of the early ideals of the community were not religious or personal, but a product of larger historical forces. Thus he uses the caliphate of ʿUthmān as a canvas upon which to demonstrate his own concern with *ʿaṣabiyyah* (group feeling, tribal loyalties) and how it is undermined by urbanization and decadence. Khalidi notes this as well and gives the following translation of Ibn Khaldūn's introduction to ʿUthmān's caliphate.

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[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibn Kathīr, 146.
[98] Ibid., 147.

> When the conquests had reached their limit and the Muslim religion had acquired a fully fledged state (*istukmila li'l milla al-mulk*), and the Arabs had settled down in the camp cities of Basra, Kufa, al-Sham and Egypt, keeping themselves apart from other communities, those privileged with having been Companions of the Prophet and who emulated his example. . . were the Meccan Emigrants and the Medinese Ansar from Quraysh and Hijaz, and others equally fortunate in having gained a similar status. The rest of the Arabs, such as the tribes of Bakr ibn Wa'il and ʿAbd al-Qays, as well as Rabiʿa, the Azd, Tamim, Kinda, Qudaʿa and others, shared this status in only a few cases. On the other hand, they had played a very prominent role in the conquests and they viewed these conquests as their own achievement. Meanwhile, the virtuous among them believed in giving precedence to those Companions who had attained seniority in Islam (*ahl al-sabiqa*) and in recognizing their merits. They were still dazed and amazed by prophecy, the frequency of divine revelations and angels descending and ascending. When the mist lifted and the earlier estate of affairs was somewhat forgotten, the enemy had been crushed and government had become thoroughly repressive (*istafhala al-mulk*), the roots of the jahiliyya began to throb once more.[99] They discovered that the Emigrants and Ansar from Quraysh and others had come to lord it over them. Their spirits were too proud to accept this state of affairs and this happened to coincide with the caliphate of ʿUthmān. So they began to calumniate his governors in the various camp cities, to take them to task in their every glance or step and to be slow to obey their orders.[100]

In this picture the election of ʿUthmān and the subsequent revolt against him had little to do with individual rivalries or failings, rather they were the result of larger forces that came to the surface during ʿUthmān's unfortunate caliphate.[101]

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[99] I am using Khalidi's translation for it agrees in substance with my own, except he translates this sentence as the "veins" of jahiliyyah and I believe the idea of roots of a plant cut down, but still alive beneath the surface better captures the idea.

[100] Ibn Khaldūn, *Ta'rīkh* 2/2:138 cited in Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought*, 227.

[101] In light of this image it is not surprising that although Ibn Khaldūn also mentions the spread of the Sabā'iyyah, more than its heretical aspects he points to Ibn Sabā' making his followers rich; the desire for luxury is the motivating factor rather than claims that ʿUthmān was not the rightful caliph.

ʿUthmān's Caliphate and the Reasons for the Revolt

While we see a range of positions on the *shūrā*, it is during ʿUthmān's caliphate and the explanations for the revolt that the authors more strongly express their own opinions through their selection and arrangement of sources. Al-Nuwayrī continues to present both sides of the argument. Ibn Kathīr includes some critical accounts of ʿUthmān, but emphasizes that ʿUthmān repented for those and that ultimately the revolt was due to circumstances beyond his control. In contrast Ibn al-Dawādārī and al-Dhahabī's narratives are basically a litany of complaints against ʿUthmān. However, Ibn al-Dawādārī condemns ʿUthmān in order to elevate ʿAlī as the more rightful ruler while al-Dhahabī says little about ʿAlī and instead criticizes ʿUthmān as a weak leader. Ibn Khaldūn also uses ʿUthmān's caliphate to illustrate his larger theme of the role of *ʿaṣabiyyah* in the rise and fall of dynasties.

Al-Nuwayrī begins ʿUthmān's caliphate with a list of all the positive aspects of his character and his reign. ʿUthmān married two daughters of the Prophet, bought the well for which he was promised Paradise, bought the land to widen the mosque in Medina, and supplied Muḥammad's army.[102] Al-Nuwayrī gives the long and impressive version of ʿUthmān's first sermon in which ʿUthmān urged people not to get caught up in the pursuits of this world.[103] After this positive introduction, al-Nuwayrī includes more critical information, but he still gives a range of interpretations. For example, he states ʿUthmān changed his governors right away, but in the very next sentence he says ʿUthmān waited a year to do so, just as ʿUmar had advised.[104] Or, although al-Walīd was indeed found drunk, he promptly received the appropriate *ḥadd* punishment.

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[102] Al-Nuwayrī, 402-4.
[103] Ibid., 405.

This dualism continues throughout al-Nuwayrī's portrayal of ʿUthmān's caliphate and the events leading up to the siege. He states that problems first began when "Satan entered Kufa," but then he later points out that the conflict was caused by tensions in the provinces between the different positions and objectives of successive waves of emigrants.[105] More immediately, he includes accounts that hold ʿUthmān at least partly responsible for the growing unrest in the provinces and repenting, while on the other hand also telling of the Sabāʾiyyah movement that was conspiring against ʿUthmān.[106] Al-Nuwayrī brings these two versions together by blaming the unrest and ʿUthmān's failure to deal with it on the fact that his envoys brought back false reports that all was well in the provinces.[107] The reader is led to believe that if ʿUthmān had known the real state of affairs he would have addressed them. This very conveniently spares judgment of ʿUthmān – or any ruler – while blaming his representatives and governors.[108] It is not too surprising, I suppose, that a career bureaucrat would emphasize the importance of having good ministers. However, as the situation escalates, al-Nuwayrī describes ʿUthmān as more personally responsible.

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[104] Ibid., 429.
[105] Ibid., 430, 437.
[106] Ibid., 466-7.
[107] Ibid., 474-5.
[108] This echoes Cooperson's analysis of the portrayal of Ibn Ḥanbal in Mamlūk biographical literature in which the power of the caliph, sulṭān, and *ʿulamāʾ* reflects the ideal arrangement in the Mamlūk period. See above.

Al-Nuwayrī portrays ʿUthmān as contributing to the deteriorating situation, but not to a degree that deserved rebellion. ʿUthmān certainly made the mistake of listening to Marwān rather than ʿAlī.[109] But this was not the reason for the revolt, because even then the "calamity calmed down" and the "attack" on Medina "came suddenly."[110] The attackers supposedly were motivated by the letter to the Egyptian governor. However the account of this event is introduced by "it is said" rather than an *isnād* or even "he said."[111] Moreover, we are told right away that ʿUthmān knew nothing about it, that it was admitted to be Marwān's doing and even more significantly, that the band was really after booty. Although the besiegers claimed the letter and ʿUthmān's denial of it amounted to the same thing because he was either weak or a liar, ʿAlī exposed the whole story to be nothing but a pre-arranged plot.[112] Finally, in ʿUthmān's defense, is the fact that the Companions were coming to his aid and simply did not reach him in time.[113] Like al-Nuwayrī, Ibn Kathīr includes some negative material, while still trying to excuse ʿUthmān, but he includes much less of the former and much more of the latter.

Ibn Kathīr defends ʿUthmān's caliphate, not because ʿUthmān was a perfect ruler, but because ʿUthmān tried to do right and made amends when he fell short. Regarding the common accusations of nepotism, Ibn Kathīr acknowledges that ʿUthmān appointed members of his family to key posts. But this does not seem such a bad thing when he also relies on accounts that portray al-Walīd, for example, very positively. The reader is told that for five years al-Walīd did not have a door on his house so that he could hear any complaints and act upon them.[114] Ibn Kathīr says ʿUthmān later removed him because he knelt four times in prayer. Separately Ibn Kathīr notes "it is said" that some conspired against al-Walīd and testified that he drank alcohol. But when ʿUthmān found out about it, he ordered the *ḥadd* punishment, ʿAlī removed al-Walīd's robe, and Saʿīd b. al-ʿĀṣ whipped him –there are no divisions among the Companions in Ibn Kathīr's narrative.[115]

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[109] Al-Nuwayrī, 483.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid., 486.
[113] Ibid., 487.

Ibn Kathīr is willing to condemn an unjust ruler; his argument is that ʿUthmān was not unjust. Ibn Kathīr gives the full transcript of the confrontation between ʿUthmān and ʿAlī at the end of year thirty-four in which ʿAlī warned ʿUthmān lest he be the murdered unjust imām of the community. ʿAlī stated:

> Know, ʿUthmān, that the best of God's servants in His eyes is a just imam, one who has been guided aright and who himself gives right guidance. . . The worst of men in God's sight is a tyrannical imam, one who has gone astray himself and by whom others are led astray. . . Verily, I heard the Messenger of God say, "The Day of Resurrection will be brought by the tyrannical imam; he will have no helper and no advocate, so that he will be cast into Hell. . ." I tell you beware of God and His sudden assault and His vengeance, for His punishment is harsh and painful indeed. I tell you beware lest you be the murdered imam of this community.[116]

This is a powerful indictment against ʿUthmān that his acts were not minor political mistakes, but acts of injustice – injustice that would be divinely punished. Ibn Kathīr may have been giving a warning to contemporary rulers as well, for he is the only one who includes the full content of this confrontation.[117] Ibn Kathīr also includes ʿUthmān's response in which he defended all his behavior and then publicly apologized for anything he may have done wrong. In fact, Ibn Kathīr frequently refers to ʿUthmān repenting. It was one way to defend ʿUthmān, but he may also have been exhibiting what was the ideal behavior for any ruler. For example, other narratives do not emphasize this aspect of the narrative, or actively downplay its significance. Ibn Kathīr does seem to believe in a contract of accountability between the ruler and the people.

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[114] Ibn Kathīr, 151. Attributed to al-Wāqidī, this account is not in the other Mamlūk sources.

[115] Ibid., 155.

[116] Ibid., 188-9. This passage is identical to the al-Wāqidī account in al-Ṭabarī and Ibn al-Athīr.

Having admitted to the possibility of confronting the unjust ruler, Ibn Kathīr dedicates the remainder of his narrative to showing how, as a Companion, ʿUthmān was not unjust – not because he was perfect, but because he repented. Year thirty-five of Ibn Kathīr's chronicle opens with the continuing problem of governors in the provinces, but there are no further references to nepotism on ʿUthmān's part. ʿUthmān had sought counsel to remedy the problems in the provinces and repented for any wrong he may have done. Rather it is the fickleness of the people that is the problem, stirred up by the spreading Sabāʾiyyah heresy and the machinations of various disgruntled individuals in the provinces. Although Ibn Kathīr refutes accounts that accuse ʿUthmān of writing the letter to the Egyptian governor, he also includes several accounts that argue ʿUthmān's ignorance was enough to require his resignation.[118] Ibn Kathīr appears to claim that authority is, at least to a certain degree, contingent upon performance. According to Ibn Kathīr, ʿUthmān was not an astute politician or talented leader, but he was sincere and well-intentioned, and as the narrative develops the focus shifts to his personal piety. It is ʿUthmān's piety that makes up for his failed performance.

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[117] Al-Nuwayrī comes the closest and records that ʿAlī confronted ʿUthman about problems in the community. ʿAlī reminded him of the rewards of an imām who does right and guides aright as well as warning him of the eternal suffering of the one who does not and that ʿUthmān should beware lest he be "the imām of the community who is killed and opens on the community murder and fighting until the Day of Judgment." Al-Nuwayrī, 471. But even in this, al-Nuwayrī has removed the label "unjust imām" and the idea that ʿUthmān's death would be an act of judgment by God.

In contrast, Ibn al-Dawādārī and al-Dhahabī present ʿUthmān's caliphate as a series of mistakes and intentional abuses; ʿUthmān was personally responsible for the deteriorating state of affairs. Significantly, neither author makes any mention of the Sabāʾiyyah heresy that was spreading through the garrison towns. The account of ʿUthmān's caliphate in Ibn al-Dawādārī is a litany of errors and innovations from the fact that ʿUthmān gave treasury money to his relatives and brought back relatives that Muḥammad had sent into exile, to his fencing in of communal pasture land.[119] Common complaints about ʿUthmān's governors are exaggerated so that the reader is told that ʿUthmān's governor in Egypt was abusive to the point that the people complained he killed whoever criticized him.[120] Moreover, rather than ʿUthmān calling for his governors and seeking council, in Ibn al-Dawādārī ʿUthmān took no such action and any advice he received was unsolicited.[121]

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[118] Ibid., 196. He repeats this in a lengthy account based on Ibn ʿAsākir after his account of the murder. Ibid., 208.

[119] Ibn al-Dawādārī, 275-279.

[120] Ibid., 286. ʿUthmān was advised by Ṭalḥah, ʿĀʾishah, and ʿAlī to remove him.

[121] Ibid., 287.

Al-Dhahabī is critical of ʿUthmān from the opening events explaining the reasons for the revolt up until the closing scenes of ʿUthmān's death.[122] Indeed his overall lack of sympathy for ʿUthmān is somewhat surprising.[123] Al-Dhahabī selects and arranges his sources in such a way that ʿUthmān appears responsible for the breakdown in the community because of his acts of nepotism and subsequent inability to respond decisively to the growing unrest. Al-Dhahabī begins year thirty-five of his chronicle by stating it was the year of the military expedition at Dhū Khushub, in which Muʿāwiyah was commander. Secondly, ʿAbdallāh b. ʿAbbās led the hajj that year. And finally he states that it was the year in which ʿUthmān was murdered and "in which the Egyptians and others revolted against ʿUthmān and went to him to depose him from the caliphate."[124] Thus, from the very beginning, ʿUthmān is portrayed in a position of weakness while others have taken over the roles of military and religious leadership in the community.

In addition to specific abuses, al-Dhahabī returns again and again to ʿUthmān's general weakness of leadership and character. Among the list of complaints recorded in al-Dhahabī, are that ʿUthmān "destroyed" the Qurʾān and favored his family. Al-Dhahabī notes that ʿUthmān's removal of Saʿīd b. al-ʿĀṣ from the governorship of Kufa was the "first weakness to enter ʿUthmān's [reign]" and that subsequently the people were "emboldened against him."[125] This event is generally held up in the chronicles as the turning point in ʿUthmān's reign. Al-Dhahabī goes on to state that after this, ʿUthmān "became weak and wavered in his command of them and installed his relatives and people of his house."[126] He continues by providing accounts of ʿUthmān replacing other governors, the motivation for which is clearly portrayed as nepotism or capriciousness. Al-Dhahabī further criticizes ʿUthmān not only for his lack of leadership, but for his weakness of character as well, by including an account that reminds the reader that ʿUthmān fled at the Battle of Uḥud and was absent from the Battle of Badr.[127]

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[122] He combines all the events that led up to the revolt as well as the revolt itself in year thirty-five of his chronicle *Taʾrīkh al-Islām*. The narrative of the revolt is about thirty-pages in length.
[123] After all Ibn al-Dawādārī was the son of a Mamlūk, but al-Dhahabī was a respected scholar and supposedly a sympathetic critic of the likes of Ibn Taymiyyah.
[124] Al-Dhahabī, 429.
[125] Ibid., 431.

Al-Dhahabī and Ibn al-Dawādārī differ in one significant way, however; whereas al-Dhahabī uses incidents to criticize poor leadership in general, Ibn al-Dawādārī sets out to praise ʿAlī. Ibn al-Dawādārī from the beginning paints ʿUthmān in a negative light, favoring his family and abusing his privileges, while ʿAlī urged him to behave justly and was clearly favored by the people. For example the incident of al-Walīd's drunkenness symbolizes ʿUthmān's favoritism and wavering, while ʿAlī repeatedly urged him to carry out the *sharīʿah* (*ḥadd*) punishment. In the end it was ʿAlī who had to carry it out.[128] In Ibn al-Dawādārī's narrative, as the events of the revolt heat up ʿAlī is portrayed as the natural leader; both the people and ʿUthmān repeatedly appealed to him for help.[129] The focus is on the conflict between Marwān and ʿAlī, while ʿUthmān appears as a hapless pawn.[130] ʿAlī repeatedly gave ʿUthmān good advice while Marwān abused the people, turned them against ʿUthmān, and convinced ʿUthmān that ʿAlī was plotting for the caliphate.[131] This is why -- Ibn al-Dawādārī would have his readers believe -- ʿUthmān did not send out ʿAlī to negotiate for him during the siege – with disastrous consequences.[132]

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[126] Ibid., 432.
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibn al-Dawādārī, 278. Al-Dhahabī and al-Nuwayrī name someone else.
[129] Ibid., 291.
[130] Ibn al-Dawādārī gives a very truncated version of ʿAlī's confrontation with ʿUthmān. ʿAlī praised ʿUthmān's relationship with the Prophet and stated that ʿUthmān was as aware of the situation as ʿAlī.

In contrast to Ibn al-Dawādārī's ʿAlid sympathies, I would argue that al-Dhahabī was concerned with the threat of weak leadership within the Sunnī context. Rather than highlighting the respect ʿAlī commanded in the community, al-Dhahabī contrasts Muʿāwiyah's decisiveness with ʿUthmān's weakness.[133] He tells how Muʿāwiyah, while in Medina for the pilgrimage, "saw how pliant ʿUthmān had become and the disturbance of his affairs."[134] Muʿāwiyah asked ʿUthmān to accompany him to Syria, where, due to his strong leadership, the people were still obedient. In al-Ṭabarī's version of this account by Sayf b. ʿUmar, Muʿāwiyah urged ʿUthmān to accompany him because he feared for his life; the focus is on the aggression of the dissidents. Al-Dhahabī inserts the phrase "pliancy of ʿUthmān" to blame ʿUthmān's incompetence. The shift in focus is subtle, yet significant. In a later Sayf account which records how Muʿāwiyah sent an army to defend ʿUthmān, al-Dhahabī has Muʿāwiyah explain that it was because ʿUthmān was "not capable" of

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There is nothing about murdered imāms, unjust or otherwise. (Was he denying ʿUthmān this title?) Nor, however, is there the warning of division and bloodshed that will result from his murder. Whereas in Ibn Kathīr ʿUthmān then defended himself from the pulpit pointing out that he had simply been more lenient with them than ʿUmar, in Ibn al-Dawādārī ʿUthmān goes out to the people, but gives no speech to defend his behavior. Ibid., 290.

[131] Ibid., 281, 291.

[132] According to Ibn al-Dawādārī, it was Marwān who wrote the letter and yet ʿUthmān accused his scribe and ʿAlī. Despite this, when ʿUthmān was besieged, ʿAlī sent him water and his sons to defend him, while trying to restrain the besiegers and insisting that they only wanted Marwān. Ibid., 294, 299.

[133] ʿAlī is remarkably absent from al-Dhahabī's narrative.

[134] Al-Dhahabī, 435.

dealing with the situation.[135] Al-Dhahabī's narrative indicates how historians could continue to reinterpret the past through both the selection and arrangement of early, individual *akhbār* as well as through the editing and manipulating of those *akhbār*.

The consequences of ʿUthmān's weakness culminate in the event of the letter to the Egyptian governor. Al-Dhahabī gives several accounts of this event, including one in which the dissidents admitted the whole thing was a pre-arranged conspiracy and another in which ʿUthmān demanded they produce two witnesses against him, which the besiegers were apparently unable to do.[136] The final account, however, records the rebels stating, "'God has made your blood lawful, and you have violated the pact and the covenant [which you made with us].' And they laid siege to him in the palace."[137] In contrast to Ibn Kathīr shifting blame away from ʿUthmān through his willingness to repent, al-Dhahabī ends with ʿUthmān responsible for the general feeling of discontent in the community. Whereas Ibn Kathīr sees willingness to repent as a source of strength and deserving of praise, al-Dhahabī says nothing about repentance, but moves on to confrontations between ʿUthmān and his besiegers in which little is said to defend ʿUthmān personally. Instead the focus is on the importance of unity and loyalty to the ruler – regardless of his behavior.

Ibn Khaldūn also focuses on the forces that ensure and threaten unity, but for him, the behavior of individual rulers seems largely irrelevant. He portrays Muʿāwiyah actively trying to preserve the community, not from the weakness of

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[135] Ibid., 451.
[136] Ibid., 443.
[137] Ibid.

ʿUthmān, but the reassertion of pre-Islamic tribal loyalties. For Ibn Khaldūn, the events of ʿUthmān's caliphate are an example of how tribal allegiances are a powerful force either for or against unity. Thus he records Muʿāwiyah reminding those who were first stirring up trouble that they owed a debt to Quraysh for the establishment and protection of the community. Therefore, they should not separate from their protection. Moreover, they should be patient in the face of tyranny and bear their burdens with patience and God would bless them.[138] This echoes Ibn Khaldūn's introduction to ʿUthmān's caliphate in which he stated: "government had become thoroughly repressive." According to Ibn Khaldūn, ʿUthmān was not to blame for this, rather it was because government was being established and the memory of Muḥammad was fading. In Ibn Khaldūn's schema, corruption, urbanization, and decadence undermine original communal solidarity and strength.[139] As the strength provided by the combination of *ʿaṣabiyyah* and religion faded, pre-Islamic tribal rivalries reasserted themselves; this was the cause of the tensions in the provinces that ultimately undermined ʿUthmān's caliphate.

In his focus on larger forces, Ibn Khaldūn largely ignores specific personalities and protests involved in the revolt. Ibn Khaldūn appears unconcerned with older conflicts either between ʿAlī and ʿUthmān or over the ideal, just imām. When ʿAlī confronted ʿUthmān all Ibn Khaldūn records is that ʿAlī "presents to him what he fears from the consequences of that [his behavior] in this world and the next."[140] The exact nature of what "that" was remains vague. When ʿUthmān called his governors together for counsel, he told them to handle complaints justly. Ibn Khaldūn tells his readers the governors disagreed as to what was the best solution to the problem without telling them exactly what the problems were, what the governors suggested, or what they disagreed about. The details seem less relevant than the larger point that problems arose and indeed always do arise.[141]

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[138] Ibn Khaldūn, 563. This account may also be influenced by Ibn Khaldūn's North African origins and closer contact with al-Andalus. It is redolent of the *Imāmah*'s portrayal of Muʿāwiyah and the Umayyads.

[139] Thus it is not surprising that when he tells of the Sabā'iyyah movement, the emphasis repeatedly is upon how Ibn Sabā' enriched his followers, buying their support. Ibid., 567.

The key problem is divided loyalties. Ibn Khaldūn chooses accounts which record that ʿAlī, Ṭalḥah and al-Zubayr confronted ʿUthmān with the people's complaints and that members of the Banū Umayyah, including Marwān, were with ʿUthmān in the house.[142] Unlike Ibn Kathīr, Ibn Khaldūn clearly feels no need to defend the illusory unity of the early community; in fact, one of his arguments is to point out how quickly it fell apart.

The Siege

The siege and murder of ʿUthmān marked the end of the unified Islamic community established by Muḥammad and our authors clearly perceived the significance of this event. Once the siege begins Ibn al-Dawādārī and al-Dhahabī drop their critical tone and fall back upon the standard defenses -- if not for ʿUthmān then for the unity of the community. Ibn Kathīr, in contrast, relies heavily on *ḥadīth* that defend ʿUthmān's personal piety far more than the rights of rulers generally. It is due to ʿUthmān's virtue as much as his office that the other Companions support his caliphate. Whereas Ibn al-Dawādārī and al-Dhahabī link obedience to unity, Ibn Kathīr's focus on the unity of the Companions is more an indictment of contemporary rulers for not being like the Companions than it is of factions that might threaten the unity of the community. In contrast, al-Nuwayrī's narrative remains ambivalent as he goes back and forth blaming ᶜUthmān for listening to bad advice and making bad choices during the siege, while at the same time portraying the besiegers as illegitimate conspirators and the Companions as loyal to ᶜUthmān. Although all of these authors include ᶜUthmān's familiar defense about not removing a shirt of authority or killing a fellow Muslim, only al-Nuwayrī and Ibn Khaldūn include the besiegers' rebuttals. Their siege narratives become more rather than less critical of ᶜUthmān, and consequently, of duplicitous and corrupt rulers generally.

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[140] Ibid.

[141] For example, the reader is never told what "the letter" said or to whom it was addressed.

[142] Ibid., 569-70.

Al-Nuwayrī's criticisms of ᶜUthmān may be a part of his all-inclusiveness, but in Ibn Khaldūn's more selective narrative it is noteworthy that he includes the besiegers' arguments even though he had downplayed their reasons for besieging ᶜUthmān in the first place. Al-Nuwayrī continues to include accounts that portray both sides of the conflict; the result is a siege narrative that is far more critical of ᶜUthmān than that found in the other chronicles. Only al-Nuwayrī includes the account of ᶜUthmān following Marwān's advice to ask ᶜAlī to negotiate for him as a stalling technique. Through ᶜAlī, ᶜUthmān promised to stop oppression and remove hated governors, and then used the time to gather weapons and prepare for battle.[143] In Ibn Khaldūn's account, ᶜUthmān asked ᶜAlī to intercede for him and get him a three-day extension to address the besiegers' complaints, but there is no mention of his having an ulterior motive. Rather we are simply told that the time passed and nothing changed and so they besieged ʿUthmān in earnest.[144] According to Ibn Khaldūn's narrative, the besiegers insisted ʿUthmān's ignorance about the letter proved his weakness and therefore he had to step down. When ʿUthmān promised to repent and restore good government, only Ibn Khaldūn includes the besiegers' response that ʿUthmān had repented and then returned to the same bad behavior several times and so they had not choice but to remove him or kill him.[145]

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[143] Al-Nuwayrī, 489-90.

All the narratives include ʿUthmān's defense that it is only lawful to kill a fellow Muslim if he has apostatized, committed adultery, or killed an innocent person. But al-Nuwayrī and Ibn Khaldūn include the besiegers' rebuttal that there is an additional reason – namely the person who spreads corruption in the land and prevents justice from being carried out. ʿUthmān was such a person.[146] When ʿUthmān tried to defend his behavior and the unity of the community, the besiegers responded that he had changed and become a test from God. Finally, when ʿUthmān tried to defend the importance of the unity of the community and the negative consequences of *fitnah*, they responded that it was not right to allow an unjust ruler to remain in power for fear of *fitnah* some time in the future. Nevertheless, the besiegers became more aggressive only when they heard of the approaching armies.[147] Both al-Nuwayrī and Ibn Khaldūn mention that sons of key Companions were with ʿUthmān in the house. While Ibn Khaldūn says the people were divided about what to do, al-Nuwayrī states that many of the faithful believers were on the hajj, suggesting that that was why the besiegers were able to get the upper hand.[148]

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[144] Ibn Khaldūn 573.
[145] Ibid., 572.
[146] Al-Nuwayrī, 491; Ibn Khaldūn, 592.

Ibn al-Dawādārī and al-Dhahabī's narratives are the most critical of ʿUthmān's caliphate; however, once the siege begins they defend ʿUthmān for the sake of the unity of the community.[149] Both authors include ʿUthmān's own defense that he bought the well of Rūmah, enlarged the mosque of Medina, and supplied Muḥammad's army. Ibn al-Dawādārī notes that ʿUthmān refused to fight in self-defense because to kill one person was to kill all.[150] Al-Dhahabī records ʿUthmān's warning to his besiegers that if they killed him they would never again pray or divide booty together. According to Ibn al-Dawādārī, ʿUthmān warned the besiegers that if they killed him the sword of God would be unsheathed against the community and would not be re-sheathed until 35,000 were killed.[151] Whereas Ibn al-Dawādārī warns against the consequences of killing a ruler, al-Dhahabī uses variant accounts that take this same defense one step further, placing obedience to the ruler over obedience to religion.

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[147] Ibn Khaldūn at first emphasizes that the dissidents only acted when they heard of the approaching pilgrims and reinforcements. "When the Egyptians saw that the pilgrims wanted their goal and that the people from the garrison towns were traveling to them, they resolved to kill ʿUthmān and to meet their fates/martyrdom; they desired in that their salvation." Ibn Khaldūn, 574.

[148] Al-Nuwayrī, 493.

[149] Ibn al-Dawādārī does launch one last criticism against ʿUthmān. He describes how ʿAlī negotiated a deal between ʿUthmān and the dissidents, a signed covenant to address their grievances. This is much stronger language than in al-Nuwayrī, who mentions a petition from the people, but does not mention ʿUthmān agreeing to anything in writing. In this way when ʿUthmān did not make the requested changes, his guilt, according to Ibn al-Dawādārī, was much greater. However, despite portraying the rivalry between Marwān and ʿAlī, Ibn al-Dawādārī does not include the account seen in al-Nuwayrī in which ʿUthmān listened to Marwān and intentionally deceived the people. Ibn al-Dawādārī also makes a point of portraying ʿAlī's continued loyalty to ʿUthmān, such as sending him water. In contrast, in al-Dhahabī's siege narrative, there is little reference to ʿAlī or Marwān. When ʿAlī confronted or advised ʿUthmān, it was with other Companions (al-Dhahabī, 458). Nor does he make any mention of ʿUthmān making contracts with the people that he did not keep or gathering weapons. The point, for al-Dhahabī is not that ʿUthmān was a scoundrel, but that he was incompetent.

[150] Indeed he could have defended himself for there were 700 people with him in the house, including the sons of key Companions. Ibn al-Dawādārī, 297; al-Dhahabī, 453.

Al-Dhahabī makes the principle of political unity more important than religious principles when he offers two accounts that deal with the dangers of raising the Qur'ān against the sulṭān. The first warns that if a community kills its prophet, it will not be reconciled together by God until the blood of 70,000 has been shed. And the community that kills its caliph will not be reconciled together by God until the blood of 40,000 has been shed. The speaker within the account continues his warning, stating: "'And the community was not destroyed until they raised the Qur'ān against the sulṭān.' But they did not pay any attention to him and [went ahead and] killed him [ʿUthmān]."[152] This brings up anachronistic images of a later decisive conflict in the move towards the permanent division of the community – the Battle of Siffīn between ʿAlī and Muʿāwiyah in 657 C.E.[153] Al-Dhahabī's next account also reminds his readers that raising the Qur'ān against the sulṭān only produces divisions by pointing out that the Khārijites were the first to do this.[154] By reminding his readers of these events and conflating them with the revolt against ʿUthmān, al-Dhahabī implies that religion, even in the form of the Qur'ān, should not be allowed to determine political legitimacy. Authority and stability are the most important objectives according to al-Dhahabī.

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[151] Ibn al-Dawādārī, 299.

[152] Al-Dhahabī., 446-7. These accounts are also in al-Balādhurī.

[153] In this conflict, a group suggested placing the Qur'ān on the end of their spears stating the Qur'ān would decide which side was in the right. ʿAlī allowed for this, lost the military advantage and eventually lost the battle.

[154] Ibid., 447.

Ibn Kathīr also defends the unity of the community, but focuses much more on the unity of the Companions. He does not deny that ʿUthmān made mistakes, but ʿUthmān repented and the Companions supported him. It was ʿAlī who ʿUthmān chose to send to confront the band when they first arrived in Medina and it was ʿAlī who defended ʿUthmān against their list of grievances.[155] When ʿUthmān publicly repented the band left satisfied. It was the letter that brought them back, but ʿUthmān denied any knowledge of it and the Companions continued to support him.[156] Ibn Kathīr wants to emphasize this last point. He notes that there is an account which states the Companions wrote to each other calling for the removal of ʿUthmān, but Ibn Kathīr declares this to be "a lie against the Companions."[157] Once the siege is fully underway Ibn Kathīr shifts from defending the Companions and focuses instead on defending ʿUthmān.

Ibn Kathīr defends ʿUthmān's leadership by focusing on ʿUthmān's piety and close relationship with the Prophet Muḥammad. He provides pages of traditions, most of which are based on the authority of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, that defend ʿUthmān's right to the caliphate. Ibn Kathīr reminds his readers that ʿUthmān bought the well at Rūmah for the Muslims and enlarged the mosque in Medina – both things for which he was promised Paradise.[158] He also includes the *hadīth* from ʿĀishahʾ

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[155] Ibn Kathīr, 191-2.
[156] Ibid., 195-6.
[157] Ibid., 196.
[158] Ibid., 200.

that stated when Muḥammad was sick and called for some of his Companions, he did not want to see any one but ʿUthmān.[159] This same account continues by stating ʿUthmān refused to fight back during the siege because he had promised Muḥammad that he would not fight other Muslims and that he would endure any hardship with patience. ʿUthmān does not defend himself not only for the sake of the unity of the community, but because of his close relationship with Muḥammad. This account, furthermore, explains away the *fitnah* as something foreseen by Muḥammad and therefore not the fault of ʿUthmān or the Companions. Ibn Kathīr also defends the Companions' choice of ʿUthmān as caliph by including *ḥadīth* in which Muḥammad states that he preferred for the tribe of Quraysh to any other and that if he had the keys to Paradise, he would give them to the Quraysh.[160] In Ibn Kathīr's narrative the individual and collective virtue of the early community remains intact – despite the tragic events unfolding around them.

The Murder

In the account of ʿUthmān's murder these authors continue to debate the merits of ʿUthmān and the consequences of rebellion. Al-Nuwayrī and Ibn Khaldūn's narratives are virtually identical to al-Ṭabarī's.[161] Ibn Kathīr includes additional accounts that highlight ʿUthmān's patient piety and the attackers' greed and violence. In contrast, Ibn al-Dawādārī and al-Dhahabī's narratives are quite perfunctory; they make no real effort to sympathize with ʿUthmān or to condemn his killers.

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[159] Ibid., 203.

[160] Ibid., 201. These same accounts also appear in al-Dhahabī, 432.

[161] Ibn Khaldūn abbreviates some details.

The key details of the narrative established by al-Ṭabarī and recorded in al-Nuwayrī and Ibn Khaldūn are as follows.[162] The besiegers burned down the door in order to enter ʿUthmān's house. Despite ʿUthmān's refusal to defend himself, others engaged the besiegers on his behalf and were struck down.[163] In contrast to the besiegers' violent entrance, ʿUthmān quietly and intently recited the Qurʾān, during which time he had a dream in which Muḥammd appeared to him and promised him he would breakfast with him in Paradise that day. The contrast between ʿUthmān and his attackers continues as three different men were sent in to kill ʿUthmān, but when he reminded them he had been clothed with a shirt of authority from God, they departed.[164] Al-Nuwayrī includes several different versions of the murder which discuss whether Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr was among those who finally attacked ʿUthmān. Theses versions include accounts of how ʿUthmān's wives were assaulted as well and Nāʾilah had her fingers severed as she tried to defend ʿUthmān. ʿUthmān's servants also tried to defend him and several were killed. While ʿUthmān was brutally stabbed and his blood flowed onto the open pages of the Qurʾān, the attackers pillaged the house and seized the public treasury, attempted also to cut off ʿUthmān's head, and prevented ʿUthmān from receiving a proper burial.[165] The narrative concludes with the report of Nāʾilah writing to Muʿāwiyah, informing him that ʿUthmān had been killed by unbelievers and sending him ʿUthmān's bloody shirt.[166]

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[162] Ibn Khaldūn, 572-575.
[163] Al-Nuwayrī, 494.
[164] Ibid., 496.
[165] Ibid., 497-500. He includes a variant account (*hakī* from Abū ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-Barr) about Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr and that after he entered and grabbed ʿUthmān's beard, he left and Rūmān b. Sirḥān, the blue-eyed entered and he was the one who called ʿUthmān a donkey, but also asked him what religion he was. And ʿUthmān responded that he was of the millah of Ibrahim ḥanīfān muslimān (499).

Ibn Kathīr includes all of the above and elaborates further on details that contrast the attackers' violence with ʿUthmān's pious patience. He begins the entire narrative with the account of ʿUthmān praying and fasting, followed by no less than nine variations of the breakfast dream.[167] Visions of Muḥammad and the promise of Paradise are clearly a strong personal vindication of ʿUthmān and his religious qualifications to guide the community of Believers. Ibn Kathīr also provides several different accounts of the murder itself producing a graphic and gruesome narrative. One account states:

> Then a man came upon ʿUthmān and hit him on the head and his blood trickled onto the Qurʾān (*muṣḥaf*) and stained it. Then they took turns beating him and then another man came and struck him in the neck with a sword. And Nāʾilah bt. al-Farāfiṣah al-Kalbiyyah jumped on him screaming. . . and she grabbed the sword so that the man sliced her hand . . Then they seized the property of the house. And a man passed by ʿUthmān and his head was resting on the Qurʾān and he kicked his head away from the Qurʾān, saying: 'By God I have not seen a better face of an unbeliever than today nor a more generous unbeliever prostrate on his side.'"[168]

Ibn Kathīr follows this with several more accounts all of which focus on the violent nature of the assault while ʿUthmān himself continued reading the Qurʾān so that his blood flowed onto its open pages. The rebels, in turn, come across as violent and aggressive, as well as irreligious when in another account they kicked the Qurʾān out of ʿUthmān's hands onto the floor and then pillaged the house. The account quoted above concludes by stating that the attackers raced through the house seizing everything down to the drinking glasses. The emphasis on ʿUthmān's piety combined with the defense of his actions during his caliphate condemns this murder of ʿUthmān while leaving open the possibility of legitimately removing an illegitimate ruler.

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[166] Ibid., 502.

[167] Ibn Kathīr, 203-4.

[168] Ibid., 206. This account is similar to a Sayf account in al-Ṭabarī, although the final remarks about ʿUthmān being an unbeliever are not in the al-Ṭabarī version.

Ibn Kathīr concludes his narrative of the revolt with the attackers regretting their deed after the fact.[169] He has them express their regret with a verse from the Qurʾān in which the Israelites regret worshipping the golden calf. He states, "Then they were filled with remorse and saw that they had erred and said: 'If our Lord does not forgive us we will surely be lost.'"[170] The Qurʾanic passage goes on to state that there are consequences for disobedience, but that God is also forgiving and kind. A few verses later Moses prays:

> O Lord, if You had pleased You could have annihilated them and me before this. Will you destroy us for something the foolish among us have done? This is but a trial from You whereby You will lead whom You will astray and guide whom You please. You are our savior, so forgive us and have mercy on us, for You are the best of forgivers.[171]

This image of reconciliation and forgiveness is very different from those that focus on the permanent division of the community. This is consistent with Ibn Kathīr's defense of the Companions and the early community. It could be that Ibn Kathīr was thinking more broadly as well, that forgiveness and reconciliation are the appropriate response to any internal conflict.[172] Ibn Kathīr's narrative defends ʿUthmān and condemns his attackers, but his portrayal of both is such that he does not defend all rulers or condemn all rebels regardless of the circumstances.

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[169] Ibid., 211.

[170] Q 7:149.

[171] Q 7:155.

[172] Such a shift in emphasis is also reflected in Khaled Abou El Fadl's recent work on the Islamic law of rebellion as a part of what he calls a "revisionist trend" beginning in the Mamlūk period. It is also worth noting that "During the revolt of the *amīr* Baydamūr in 762/1361, Ibn Kathīr, on being consulted

In contrast to the detailed accounts found in al-Nuwayrī and Ibn Kathīr, Ibn al-Dawādārī and al-Dhahabī's are notably terse. They do not elaborate upon events either to defend ʿUthmān or condemn his attackers. Ibn al-Dawādārī includes a version of the dream in which Muḥammad gave ʿUthmān the choice of breakfast in Paradise or fighting. ʿUthmān chose death even though Muḥammad told him if he fought he would win.[173] ʿUthmān then took up the Qurʾān, men broke in and killed him, and he was later found "slaughtered."[174] After this brief treatment, Ibn al-Dawādārī shifts his focus immediately to ʿAlī. ʿAlī returned to his home furious and the people hurried to him to give him the oath of allegiance, declaring him to be the Commander of the Faithful. ʿAlī refused, saying only the people of Badr had the right to confer the caliphate so they came to him and said: "We do not see anyone with greater right to it [the caliphate] than you."[175] When combined with Ibn al-Dawādārī's earlier portrayal of ʿUthmān and ʿAlī, ʿUthmān's murder appears as merely the detail that brought about ʿAlī's caliphate.

Al-Dhahabī also shows very little support or sympathy for ʿUthmān and downplays the attackers' aggression and violence. He makes no mention of the besiegers throwing stones or refusing to give ʿUthmān any water to drink, both points that are elaborated upon in al-Nuwayrī and Ibn Kathīr. Al-Dhahabī likewise virtually

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with the other chief *ʿulamāʾ* of Damascus, seems to have prudently counseled, in his *fatwā*, a policy of conciliation and compromise." Laoust, "Ibn Kathīr."

[173] Ibn al-Dawādārī, 300.

[174] Ibid., 301. He does make a point of stating Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr did not strike ʿUthmān.

[175] Ibid., 302.

ignores references to popular support for ʿUthmān. As far as his portrayal of ʿUthmān himself, al-Dhahabī acknowledges that ʿUthmān was reading the Qurʾān when he was killed, but he does not dwell on it or develop it in terms of a case in ʿUthmān's defense.[176] Moreover, he makes only a passing reference to any pillaging that may have taken place.[177] Finally, after the murder, al-Dhahabī summarizes the reasons for the revolt, in which he offers no defense for ʿUthmān in terms of his character or behavior. Rather, al-Dhahabī reminds the reader of all of the grievances against ʿUthmān.[178] He concludes his account of the revolt by moving immediately to the events surrounding the oath of allegiance being given to ʿAlī.[179] Considering the very small role played by ʿAlī earlier and al-Dhahabī's emphasis on the unity of the community and obedience to the ruler, this last detail appears to confirm the importance for him of a swift and stable transfer of authority.

Conclusion

Al-Dhahabī's interest in stable government is a common theme of medieval Islamic discourse, even if his willingness to condemn weakness and criticize a Companion was less so. His critical narrative of ʿUthmān on the one hand reflects the growing desire to re-evaluate early sources and place events within their proper historical perspective.[180] In similar fashion, al-Nuwayrī provides a wide range of sources from which an astute bureaucrat could pick and choose depending on the needs of the situation and the inclinations of his patron. Ibn al-Dawādārī may give some indication of what that might look like in practice as he demonstrates clearly pro-ʿAlid sympathies, but rejects the use of force against a ruler. Ibn Kathīr does not reject the use of force against an unjust ruler, but instead argues that ʿUthmān was an ideal ruler, pious and repentant. His portrayal is more consistent with the biographies of preceding centuries and thus out of step with the increasingly critical narratives found in universal chronicles after Ibn al-Athīr. His choice of sources may reflect the views of Ibn Taymiyyah and his followers or a growing conservatism that continued in the fifteenth century. Ibn Khaldūn's apparent desire to understand, rather than defend or condemn, shifts his focus away from individuals to larger historical forces. His interpretation of the revolt against ʿUthmān is similar to most Western scholarship on the subject.[181]

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[176] Al-Dhahabī, 450.
[177] Ibid., 455.
[178] Ibid., 457-460.
[179] Ibid., 460.
[180] Al-Dhahabī appears to disregard the compilations of the ninth and tenth centuries and relies on a wide range of early *akhbār*. In contrast, Ibn Kathīr's narrative is composed of lengthy accounts that have clearly been developed and stylized in the intervening centuries.

Whereas the majority of Sunnī narratives of ʿUthmān in the post-Ṭabarī sources display a settled acceptance of the relationship between sulṭāns and caliphs, *ʿulamāʾ* and rulers, obedience and justice, and concentrate their attention on Sunnī-Shīʿite tensions, in the Bahrī Mamlūk sources the relationship between political and religious authority, obedience and justice, receive renewed interest. These issues were first debated in the chronicles produced in the shadow of the ʿAbbāsid Revolution, but from within the relative security and strength of the new ʿAbbāsid regime. Similarly, the fall of the ʿAbbāsids produced an ideological revolution, but the subsequent century and a half also experienced a certain amount of strength and security under the Mamlūks. As both periods worked to establish the appropriate balance between unity and justice, *siyāsah* and *sharīʿah*, they looked to the founding principles and events of Islam for guidance. It is not surprising then that both the third/ninth and eighth/fourteenth centuries are noteworthy for the number of universal chronicles they produced.

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[181] Compare Ibn Khaldūn's treatment with that of Welhausen, Gibb, and Hinds in the Introduction.

As al-Maqrīzī observed, the invention of traditions is an indication "concerning which dispute has raged and controversy has been prolonged." But it is also, as Benedict Anderson noted, essential to holding a community together through time and space.[182] Al-Maqrīzī's own treatise on the Banū Umayyah and Banū Hāshim illustrates the ongoing tension within the discourse between the need to preserve the memory of the ideal, early Islamic community and the ways in which memory is subject to the needs of the community as it develops.[183] On the one hand al-Maqrīzī criticizes those who merely "follow their own sectarian prejudices (*madhhab al-taʿaṣṣub*)" rather than looking at "basic causes" and "inner aspects" in order to put questions in their "proper context."[184] But immediately afterwards he states: "The intelligent man, once he has comprehended the concealed causes of this matter, should adopt and conform to the well-grounded explanations of it and cease raising difficulties and objections; for what can be beyond the truth except error?"[185] But it is not so easy because truth and error are cultural constructs and "tradition is not repetition, but the transmission of a living reality, which must be renewed and rethought as the community develops."[186]

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[182] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 11-12.
[183] This is certainly not unique to the Islamic experience. Consider the following observation about American history: "For much of their history, Americans have shown a preference for hypocrisy over cynicism. Forced to choose between giving up their allegiance to the highest ideals of the Declaration of Independence and living with the tension caused by the shortfall between ideal and reality, most have elected to remain what foreigners consider naively idealistic." Appleby, Hunt and Jacob, *Telling the Truth about History*, 297-8.
[184] Al-Maqrīzī, 70.

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[185] Ibid.

[186] Jeffrey Burton Russell, *A History of Heaven: The Singing Silence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 17.

> How else can any past, which by definition comprises events, processes, structures, and so forth, considered to be no longer perceivable, be represented in either consciousness or discourse except in an 'imaginary' way? Is it not possible that the question of narrative in any discussion of historical theory is always finally about the function of imagination in the production of a specifically human truth?

CONCLUSION

One would expect to find in the medieval Sunnī discourse a defense of ʿUthmān combined with a condemnation of rebellion – and to a certain extent this is what we see. However, the range of emphases within this framework suggests that the narrative did not become stagnant or irrelevant. Rather, due to the combination of flexibility and authority in the *khabar-isnād* format, historians could claim "symbolic capital" in society as the transmitters of the sacred past as well as the shapers of the contemporary imagination. Each author uses similar methods of manipulating the available material to produce different narratives of the revolt against ʿUthmān.

In the past thirty-five years the history of medieval Islamic historiography has shifted away from believing that medieval Muslim chroniclers simply wanted to convey the facts about the past to the belief that chroniclers had a story to tell. The work of Hodgson, Humphreys, Lassner, Leder, and Noth contributed to this shift in perception. Stefan Leder shows that *akhbār* are "stories about particular incidents" whose purpose is to delineate certain character traits, especially in the "prominent personalities of early Islamic history; through innumerable repetitive representations in various situations, they have come to personify certain attributes. This penchant for the depiction of characteristics may be due to the connection of *akhbār* with a conventional 'public' art of storytelling. Related to this important orientation of *akhbār* narration is its characteristic edifying, moralizing impulse."[1] Rather than the formation of individual *akhbār*, Humphreys has considered the moralizing impulse behind the selection and arrangement of *akhbār* in the formation of narrative units within chronicles.[2] On the one hand, chroniclers understood God to be working in history from the day of Creation to the Day of Judgment; but they were also influenced by a cyclical Qur'anic paradigm of Covenant-Betrayal-Redemption.[3] Religious meta-narratives, however, were the starting rather than the ending point for medieval Islamic historiography. As Jacob Lassner, Tayeb El-Hibri, and others have shown, authors created the moral of the story in the meeting place between the religious principles of the past and the political needs of the present. While genuine authorship has been widely accepted for al-Ṭabarī and a few of his contemporaries, the image of a sacrosanct past and therefore a static historical narrative has characterized post-Ṭabarī historiographic studies up until the present day.

This study has demonstrated, however, that chroniclers continued to use the *isnād-khabar* format to retain the authority of past sources while all the while producing new narratives that reflect contemporary debates. In the third/ninth and early fourth/tenth century historians were confronted by the challenges of the ᶜAbbāsid Revolution, the *Miḥnah*, and the rise of Turkish military elites. These translated into tensions between Sunnī and Shīᶜite religio-political visions, religious and political authority, and the principles of unity and justice. Consequently, the narratives of ᶜUthmān found in the great historical syntheses produced by Ibn Saᶜd, al-Balādhurī, al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Shabbah, and Ibn Khayyāṭ present a range of interpretations on these central controversies.

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[1] Leder, "The Literary Use of the *Khabar*," 311. Noth and Conrad consider the impact of literary impulses as authors molded accounts to fit literary topoi. *The Early Arabic Historical Tradition.*
[2] Hodgson initiated this line of inquiry when he asserted that for pre-modern Muslim historians, "accuracy as to 'fact' was much less important than validity of life vision." Hodgson, "Two pre-Modern Muslim historians," 62.
[3] Humphreys, "Turning Points in Islamic Historical Practice" and "Qur'anic Myth." The comparisons drawn in Sunnī heresy literature between Shīʿites, Jews, and Christians are suggestive of this sense of repeated folly. Even within the Islamic community history appeared to repeat itself as al-Maqrīzī declares the destruction of the ʿAbbāsids to be divine retribution for their treatment of the Umayyads and ʿAlids. Al-Maqrīzī, "Book of Contention and Strife," 88-103.

In contrast, the fourth/tenth and fifth/eleventh centuries witness a polarization on these key issues due to the establishment of the sultanate alongside the caliphate and the rise of a more ideologically coherent and politically ambitious Shīᶜite ideology. In response to the Shīᶜism and secularism found in al-Yaᶜqubī, al-Masᶜūdī, and Miskawayh, the Sunnī discourse relied increasingly upon idealized, *ḥadīth*-based biographies of the Companions. This format enabled authors to side-step the tricky questions of historical causation and personal accountability that lay at the heart of the division of the early community. Thus the historiography of the fifth/eleventh and sixth/twelfth centuries is noteworthy for the number of biographical dictionaries and the virtual absence of universal chronicles. The works of Abū Nuᶜaym al-Iṣfahānī, Ibn ᶜAsākir, and Ibn al-Jawzī are representative of this period. Their praise of Islamic rulers past and present came increasingly to serve the needs of the state and played an important role in rallying support for Nūr al-Dīn and Saladin's struggles against the Crusaders.

The first half of the seventh/thirteenth century witnessed a Sunnī *entente* with the Crusaders and the Shīᶜites only to have animosity flare up again in the second half of the century after the fall of Baghdad to the Mongols and the rise of the Mamlūks in Cairo. The internal divisions among Saladin's descendents, the Ayyūbids, led them to make ideological and religious compromises in order to strengthen their military and political position over rival Ayyūbid princes. Similarly, in Baghdad the caliph appointed Shīʿites as prominent viziers in order to help him in his negotiations with Persian rivals. The challenge of the Crusades encouraged interest in the early conquests and the subsequent religio-political compromises enabled Ibn al-Athīr and Sibṭ b. al-Jawzī to write universal chronicles that reintroduced the more critical narratives found in al-Ṭabarī and his contemporaries. The greater degree of detachment from early controversies vanished with the fall of Baghdad to the Mongols and the rise of the Mamlūks in Cairo. The second half of the thirteenth century witnessed a resurgence of anti-Shīʿite sentiment and a vindication of early Islamic figures. But unlike the biographers of the previous century, Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Abī Bakr could not deny the more controversial aspects of ʿUthmān's reign; rather they engaged and refuted them.

There is reason to believe that Ibn Abī Bakr was from al-Andalus and his lengthy biography of ʿUthmān points to the importance of the events and narratives of the early Islamic period in producing and perpetuating the collective cultural identity of the medieval Islamic world from al-Andalus to al-Hind. The Andalusian narratives reflect larger Sunnī-Shīʿite tensions through the unique prism of a series of Andalusian dynasties that had to legitimate themselves over and against their immediate predecessors as well as their rivals in the larger Islamic world. For example, it is only in the narratives from the Umayyad Caliphate of Cordoba that one finds ʿUthmān defending the rights of the caliph and Muʿāwiyah defending the rights of the Umayyads over the Fāṭimids and the ʿAbbāsids. When the second Umayyad caliphate dissolved into tiny statelets and the Christians began the *Reconquista*, Andalusian *ʿulamāʾ* appealed to Berber dynasties to restore their unity and strength. The Almoravids presented themselves as defenders of the faith, waging jihād against the Christians and restoring just government among the Muslims. Abū Bakr Ibn al-ʿArabī went to Baghdad to acquire a diploma of investiture from the ʿAbbāsid caliph for the Almoravid sulṭān and wrote a narrative of ʿUthmān that emphasizes the unity of the community based on an idealized image of the Companions, a narrative in harmony with the reform program of the Almoravids. Their successors, the Almohads, also emphasized jihād, but based their legitimacy not on the unity of the community under the ʿAbbāsids, but their own claimed descent from the Prophet. In reaction, their successors, the Naṣrids of Granada, supported a policy of sunnification. Ibn Abī Bakr's treatise on the martyrdom of ʿUthmān may have been designed to rival the Almohads' veneration of the martyred al-Ḥusayn b. ʿAlī, or it may have been a part of Mamlūk sunnification policies against the Ḥusaynid rulers and Shīʿite leaders of Mecca.

The fall of the ʿAbbāsid caliphate and the rise of the Mamlūks re-ignited Shīʿite tensions for a period, but these were quickly replaced with broader debates over the relationship between religious and political authority and appeals to obedience and justice. Through his selecting and editing of sources, al-Dhahabī presents ʿUthmān as an example of the consequences of incompetent and weak leadership – namely a divided community. Using the same editing process, Ibn Kathīr implies that the principles of obedience and unity are contingent upon a ruler's justice and piety. The scribe Nuwayrī provides a range of interpretive options, while Ibn al-Dawādārī gives a pro-ʿAlid interpretation and Ibn Khaldūn a scientific one. The range of individual opinions and the focus on early Islamic history is reminiscent of the third/ninth century debates. The fourteenth century rivals the ninth century for its interest in early Islamic history and corresponding production of universal chronicles. As in the ninth century, the Mamlūk chronicles are repositories of contemporary concerns and debates and reflect an ongoing dialogue with the past.

Through this comparative textual analysis the nature of Arabic historical writing as a process of creative editing is clearly revealed. We hear the authors' voices through their predecessors' words. There is dynamism in the historical narrative as the writers uphold the authority of earlier sources while at the same time giving their own interpretation of events. Moreover, the variety of interpretations on the revolt against ʿUthmān suggests the presence of an on-going dialogue over how to find a workable balance between the ideals of unity and justice embodied in the early Islamic community and the political challenges that continued to face the community throughout the medieval period.

Combining literary analyses with historical context offers elusive, but potentially significant insights into the relationship between the views of the *ʿulamāʾ* reflected in their writings and their role in society. Due to the combination of flexibility and authority in the *isnād-khabar* format, historians could claim "symbolic capital" in society as the transmitters of the sacred past as well as the shapers of the contemporary imagination. For "life is not so much a matter of fact, as of faith, experience, memory and imagination. Matters of true importance are inexpressible and unprovable except through the imagination working on language and language somehow chiming with experience."[4]

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[4] Nigel Forde, *The Lantern and the Looking Glass* (London: SPCK), 150.

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